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THE TORY TRADITION



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THE  
TORY TRADITION

BOLINGBROKE—BURKE—DISRAELI  
SALISBURY

BY GEOFFREY G. BUTLER, M.A.

FELLOW AND LIBRARIAN OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE  
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TO  
THE PROVOST AND TRUSTEES  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



## P R E F A C E

THESE four essays were delivered as lectures before the University of Pennsylvania. Except that I have in part rewritten the lecture dealing with Disraeli, I have purposely kept them as they were delivered.

It is reasonable to hope that good feeling between England and the United States may increase continually. It has no enemy more deadly than mutual misunderstanding, and the works of Lord Bryce and President Lowell—not to mention others—have played a great part in promoting friendship. There is room too for less ambitious attempts, on the part of men who take some one feature of the national life of this country or of that, and elucidate it with sympathetic treatment. On former visits to the United States I have had forced upon me the desire of Americans to understand our

party system. The average American thinks that he understands the aims and views of the Radical party. They are the aims and the views of all sensible enlightened men! The Tory party, on the contrary, not one in ten takes the trouble to investigate. It is the party of privilege, of rapacious mediævalism, of opposition to enlightened reform! "We have no Tories in America," he will say; "we don't *stand for* that type of person over here." Radical historians have taken care that both the Tory of the eighteenth century and the Tory of the twentieth shall not stand on his merits in the land of liberty.

It became then a welcome task to an Englishman to attempt a rather different account of Toryism in a country which in all the great things of life is essentially conservative. More than this, as I sat down to think out the real meaning of Toryism and the best way to present it to an audience of strangers, I became aware of advantages in this course of action which I had not perceived before.

Recent events have concentrated the attention of the man in the street upon

the negative rather than the constructive side of Toryism. Resistance to predatory attacks upon property, and the like, will always form important items in the Tory programme. But Tory doctrine loses all that is ennobling in its appeal, if it confines itself to these; if it fails, that is, to get down to the principles which lie beneath all such resistance. The great Tory leaders of the past challenge us to something more, and by their challenge show us the secret of their own irresistible example. The captains of Toryism in the past can be made the instructors of Toryism in the present: and the Tory tradition is the Tory hope.

An example will make this clearer. Any discussion of a political nature must resolve itself finally into a discussion of the question as to whether the legislator is in the presence of any absolute rights; as to whether he need be guided by any other considerations than the will of the majority. In dealing with the large class of legislation affecting all kinds of property this consideration becomes vitally important. The argument that a man has a right to the fruit of his own industry

and ability is inadequate. It had best be left alone by the Tory. Is the Tory and Radical view left identical by this abnegation? Is the utilitarian test to pass unchallenged? I have tried to suggest in the essay on Burke a third alternative. I have discussed a right which it is suggested must form the basis of all sound legislation constructive or destructive—the right, that is, to the safeguarding of legitimate expectations. This is but one example of the lesson which past Tory thinkers have to teach us, if their doctrine be but modernised.

There is little original in my treatment of the biographical side of these essays. The extent of my obligation to others is apparent. Four specific obligations it gives me special pleasure to acknowledge. Without a certain suggestion of Mr. John Murray the essays could never have taken form. An anonymous writer in the *Quarterly Review* supplied me with my conception of Lord Salisbury's foreign policy, though I will do myself the credit to acknowledge that I did not accept his views without verification. My uncle, the Master of Trinity, gave me permission to

ransack his notes upon Burke. I cannot express to him sufficient gratitude for that permission. Finally, to my friend and colleague, Mr. Will Spens, I make a very full acknowledgment of an immense debt. If there is in this book a happy phrase, or a train of argument that commends itself to the reader, it is bound to be the outcome of one of those talks in Combination Room or on country walks, in which he knows how to inspire those that are his friends. For the imperfections in this book I myself take full responsibility. Mr. Ralph Butler, Mr. Charles Benham, and Mr. K. W. M. Pickthorn have had the kindness to help me read the proofs.

G. G. B.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE.





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# THE TORY TRADITION

## I

### LORD BOLINGBROKE

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY politics are not easy to understand. They cannot be understood by anyone who approaches them with his mind filled with our present parliamentary system. There were then no well-drilled parties working with a precision that makes a division in the House to-day little more exciting than the taking up of places for a new figure in the lancers. Parties undoubtedly existed, but the way to understand them is to watch them not in the Commons, but in the country. There they are clear enough, but at Westminster, leaders and groups pass and change so quickly that one

despairs of understanding what they are about.

Now England in the age of Anne fell into two camps, and no principle of division between them, which is offered us by historians, is completely satisfactory. The Whigs, they tell us, had the backing of the merchants; the Tory party was the Junker party, the party of the country gentry. The Tories were supported by the Church; among the Whigs were to be discovered the Dissenters and Free-thinkers. Nations, from time to time, are divided into two sections, of which one stands for the future and the other for the past. In such a position was England in 1642, and the United States in 1862. The same partition ran through the England of Queen Anne, less apparent because no crisis in the history of the country served to make it show.

In 1702 the outstanding fact was the war which England, together with half Europe, was waging against the pretensions, in Spain and elsewhere, of Louis XIV. of France. The outstanding man was the Duke of Marlborough. In the House of Commons the Tories were all-powerful,

and Marlborough started as their friend. He now broke with them. In truth, he had begun to realise that, while the war was acquiesced in by all parties at its outset, it was becoming daily less popular with the Tories. England, they said, had become the tool of the allies. The true supporters of a war policy were the monied classes, and with them Marlborough now allied himself. They were Whigs, and their leader was Godolphin.

In 1705 a Parliament was returned with a Whig majority, but in those days it was still thought best to gather into the Cabinet the most efficient men, irrespective of party. A coalition cabinet was therefore formed, and Godolphin, Marlborough, Harley, and St. John were members of it. The coalition could not work together. There was a traitor in their midst. For the Tory leader Harley not only obstructed Godolphin at the Council table, but poisoned the mind of the Queen, through Mrs. Masham, his confidante. Therefore, in 1708, Godolphin drove Harley out and St. John with him. From that day to this it has been the usual rule that cabinets should be drawn

exclusively from the party which has the majority in the House of Commons. The Whigs and Tories now faced each other, and it was the question of the peace which showed the nature of the cleavage.

In truth, it was the question of the peace that absorbed all Europe. After Blenheim and Ramillies, Louis XIV. was weary of the war, and Europe knew that he was weary. The result was that England feared that the allies would steal a march upon her and patch up a peace with Louis.<sup>1</sup> The allies feared the same from England.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, they had nothing to fear from the Whigs. Godolphin and Marlborough were determined not to stop the war until they had forced Louis to give up all hope of asserting French influence in Spain, while their treaty with the Dutch,<sup>3</sup> assuring that nation a proper boundary against the French, was meant to be a pledge of honest dealing. The Tories wanted

<sup>1</sup> *The Tatler*, No. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Mrs. Weston's allusion, *Tom Jones*, bk. vii. c. 3.

<sup>3</sup> The Barrier Treaty.

instant peace and did not care how they got it.

At this moment the situation was completely altered. The trial of Sacheverell sent through England a wave of feeling for throne and altar. The great Sarah fell from royal favour. The Whigs gave way to the Tories, and a ministry was formed under Harley, with St. John as his first lieutenant.

The period that follows is filled with the struggles of Whig and Tory for and against the peace. The Whigs formed a solid and well-disciplined force, and the pamphlets of Steele and Addison were their artillery. The Tories were less organised. It had not yet been settled who was to be leader, for the temporary popularity won by Harley as the result of his escape from an attempt at assassination was not enough in the eyes of St. John to settle that vexed question. In the end the Tories won the day and made the peace of Utrecht; but it cost them dear. They had to dismiss Marlborough from his command, and twelve peers had to be created to give them a majority for the peace in the House of Lords. They

had to throw over the allies ; they had to give up the intransigent attitude with regard to Spain. Nevertheless the peace was made ; and it is acknowledged a service to England, though the moralist and the international lawyer may well hold up their hands in horror at duplicity unparalleled both in the sphere of private honour and diplomacy.

The man responsible more than any other for the peace of Utrecht was St. John, who became about this time Lord Bolingbroke. When we consider the number of interests to be served and the number of questions to be settled, we shall not be far wrong in asserting that, in comparison with the Utrecht negotiations, those that preceded the Congress of Vienna or Berlin sink into insignificance. The task at times weighed upon the buoyant spirit of Bolingbroke, but by sheer genius, and some would add by lack of principle, he carried them through.

Indeed, the signing of a peace was regarded by him from a point of view that was not only international.

“ The peace had been judged with reason to be the only solid foundation



whereupon we could erect a Tory system.”<sup>1</sup>

It was to be the starting-ground of a new prosperity for the Tory party.

“But instead of gathering strength, either as a ministry or as a party, we grew weaker every day.”<sup>1</sup>

To what was this attributable? Bolingbroke makes no bones about it, and joins battle with his chief.

“Whilst this was doing, Oxford looked on, as if he had not been a party to all which had passed; broke now and then a jest, which savoured of the inns of court and the bad company in which he had been bred: and on those occasions, where his station obliged him to speak of business, was absolutely unintelligible.”<sup>1</sup>

Skim off the top and what do we find beneath this violent assertion?

Harley, the Earl of Oxford as he had become, was not the man to reinspire a party with enthusiasm. Again and again in the history of the Tory party there have been the “goats,” to use Lord Randolph

<sup>1</sup> A Letter to Sir William Windham, *Works*, vol. i. pp. 22, 23. I quote the edition of 1809.

Churchill's name<sup>1</sup> for the old guard—the standpatters—of his party. Harley was a “goat,” and Bolingbroke was not slow to perceive it. The party was waiting to be led. Harley wrapped up his policy in mystery and gave men to understand that perhaps there was a chance—perhaps, too, there was not—of a coalition with the Whigs.

“There is Polypragmon makes it the whole business of his life to be thought a cunning fellow, and thinks it a much greater character to be terrible than agreeable. . . . He is also wonderful adverbial in his expressions, and breaks off with a ‘perhaps’ and a nod of the head upon matters of the most indifferent nature.”<sup>2</sup>

So writes Steele of Harley on 29th June 1710. Now hesitation at this moment was fatal to the Tories. The Whigs had well perceived that for the moment they were beaten. The peace had been made by their opponents, and it was popular.

<sup>1</sup> W. S. Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, vol. i. pp. 148, 164.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tatler*, No. 191.

With masterly parliamentary tactics they turned their attention to other matters. They became the self-appointed guardians of the Hanoverian succession. They blew every trumpet within their reach to call attention to the fact. In the face of this, Harley was content to let things slide, but Bolingbroke was ready with a policy.

This was very simple. Harley the loiterer must go. He went. Bolingbroke must succeed. He did succeed. The whole administration must be purged of whiggery. From top to bottom the government of the country must be Tory. Then, when Anne died, the Tory party could go to George or James and make its terms with whichever of the two it chose.<sup>1</sup> Six weeks was all he asked, in which to see this through, but he did not get six days. For Anne died, and with her died this scheme. For a moment, indeed, Bolingbroke still hoped that the Tories might make their peace with George. But it was not

<sup>1</sup> It is erroneous to say that Bolingbroke was committed to the Pretender at this time. Of course he had corresponded with him: very few on either side had not done this. Tories could well be Hanoverians. One has only to instance many Tory conforming members of the Established Church.

to be, and before he had been on the throne six months Bolingbroke had fled to France, and the hopes of the Tories were shattered. Bolingbroke's life falls into three great divisions, and this was the end of the first part. "The grief of my soul is this—I see plainly that the Tory party is gone."<sup>1</sup> So he wrote to Atterbury in words recalled long afterwards to our minds by those used on a not dissimilar occasion by another Tory leader.<sup>2</sup> But, unlike this latter, he had before him still a long spell of life, and it was devoted to the re-creation of what had been destroyed.

Now if this interpretation be right, Bolingbroke, on the death of Anne, tried to play the part of a civilian General Monk. He was not at that time committed to the Pretender; nor, when he reached France, did he join the Pretender at once. On the contrary, he saw Lord Stair, the ambassador of King George, at Paris; he promised him to hold no Jacobite communications, a promise which he felt at liberty to break

<sup>1</sup> Macpherson's *Original Papers*, vol. ii. p. 651.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Rosebery, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, p. 8.  
" 'So Arthur Balfour is really leader,' he writes to his wife from Mafeking in November 1891, 'and Tory Democracy, the genuine article, is at an end.' "

only when "the smart" of a bill of attainder<sup>1</sup> "tingled in every vein." He retired to the country, and it was not until July, when he received from the Jacobites a report of their cause too optimistic in its nature, that he betook himself to Commercy, where James Stuart held his court. Almost at once he saw his error.

"The very first conversations with the Chevalier answered in no degree my expectations: and I assure you with great truth, that I began even then, if not to repent of my own rashness, yet to be fully convinced both of yours and mine. He talked to me like a man who expected every moment to set out for England or Scotland, but who did not very well know for which."<sup>2</sup>

With superb irony Bolingbroke points out where the mischief lay. The Jacobites were right, he saw, to plan a Scottish rising: but a rising in Scotland was useless, if it stood alone. He saw plainly that

<sup>1</sup> Bolingbroke was attainted an outlaw on 14th September 1714.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vol. i. p. 48.

the Duke of Ormonde, the most prominent Jacobite still left across the Channel, must engage the Hanoverians in the rear by a similar rising in the west of England. Above all, no steps could be taken till James could count upon the assistance of the French. These views Bolingbroke laid bare ; the Pretender armed him with full powers, and negotiations were at once opened with Versailles.

We cannot surmise what might have been accomplished by the hero of the Utrecht negotiations, if he had been given a free hand. The worthless following of James, however, hampered him at every turn by their incompetence, their ignorance, or their indiscretion.

“ Those who could write and read had letters to show, and those who had not arrived to this pitch of erudition had their secrets to whisper. No sex was excluded from this ministry. Fanny Oglethorp, whom you must have seen in England, kept her corner in it, and Olive Trant was the great wheel of our machine.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, vol. i. pp. 53, 54.

Perhaps he could have kept the Oglethorps and Trants at bay ; but for the second time a monarch's death was vitally to affect his fortunes. Louis XIV. died on 1st September 1715. "My hopes sunk as he declined and died when he expired."<sup>1</sup> With the statesmen, who with the new reign came into power at Court, Bolingbroke was unfamiliar. The Regent clearly meant to keep the Stuarts at a distance. If anything else was needed to depress the Jacobites, it was to be found in the re-appearance of Ormonde in France. Just before the death of Louis he had left England, where his presence was essential. He proceeded to plunge into the midst of the intrigue that surrounded the exiles, burning all the while with jealousy of Bolingbroke. There is no need for us to describe here the fiasco of '15. The expedition from the first was doomed. James on his return hastened to inform Bolingbroke that he had no further occasion for his services, and that he was to be succeeded by Ormonde. Bolingbroke for his part did not wait to show resentment at this abominable treatment,

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, vol. i. pp. 59, 60.

but threw off the yoke with alacrity. He says that he did not care ; and no one will be tempted to suggest the presence of sour grapes. During the next year he wrote to the distinguished Tory statesman, Sir William Windham, a letter defending his behaviour. In terms of witty scorn, rarely if ever surpassed in political writing, he exposed the Jacobites, disclaimed alliance with James Stuart, and warned the Tory party against him. The second section of his life had run its course.

No sooner had Bolingbroke received his dismissal than he was once more granted an interview by Lord Stair. His reception by that astute diplomat was cordial. He abjured the cause of the Pretender and offered his services to King George, asserting, however, as an honourable exception, that he would not betray any Jacobite State secrets that had come to his knowledge up to then. He departed with a half promise of a pardon, which, as a matter of fact, was not to come till 1723. The seven intervening years he spent in study at La Source in the valley of the Loire. Here Voltaire met him ; and in him he found the man who was to be a power-



ful influence on the development of his philosophy of life.<sup>1</sup> Here we shall leave him for the moment enjoying the society of his friends, deep in the study of his books, and content in the company of his second wife,<sup>2</sup> the Marquise de Villette, who succeeded in winning and retaining his errant affection till thirty years later, broken hearted, he laid her in an English grave. Meanwhile, we shall turn to the politics of England.

After the accession of George and the rout of the Tory party the Whigs set about the enjoyment of their victory. At first there was no division in the camp, and all combined in passing the Septennial Bill, a measure which ensured to the Whig Parliament seven years of undisturbed existence; and which was well described by the French Regent as "un coup de parti contre le Prétendant et les Torys." But unanimity was not long preserved. Sunderland and Stanhope both took the lead, and, secure in the favour of the sovereign, drove Townshend and Walpole out of

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Churton Collins' essay on Voltaire in England.

<sup>2</sup> He married her in 1720.

office. But their ascendancy was not destined to last. Their reputation perished with the explosion of the South Sea Bubble, and they did not long survive their reputation. At this trying moment it was Walpole alone who kept his head. Walpole alone was able to act as the "screen" round those who were not too much involved; and by the end of 1721 it had become obvious that Walpole was the future leader of the Whigs. He did not become that without a struggle; and his foremost rival was Lord Carteret, whose virtue and parts and personal beauty all writers of that age combine to praise—

Completely form'd in every part,  
 To win the soul, and glad the heart.  
 The powerful voice, the graceful mien,  
 Lovely alike, or heard, or seen;  
 The outward form and inward vie,  
 His soul bright beaming from his eye,  
 Ennobling every act and air,  
 With just, and generous, and sincere.<sup>1</sup>

And if Carteret was his foremost rival, there were many more of scarcely less signal

<sup>1</sup> Swift, "The Birth of Manly Virtue," inscribed to Lord Carteret.

calibre—Chesterfield, for instance, and William Pulteney, and Daniel his brilliant brother, cut off in the bright promise of his youth. All these, at one time attached to Walpole by the closest ties, had in turn to be cast off. It was not till 1725 that Walpole had completely established his primacy.

In 1723 Carteret's influence had won for Bolingbroke a pardon under the great seal. That did not restore to him the possession of his lands, nor allow him to resume his seat in the House of Lords, but it did permit him to plead his cause in person, and without delay he set about it. The measures that he took form the least creditable incidents in his whole career. He offered Walpole the support of himself and the Tory party in the struggle against Carteret. Walpole would not take presents from the Greeks. Then he tried to curry favour by offering his help in a diplomatic negotiation undertaken for the Government by Horace Walpole, now ambassador in Paris. He was rejected once again. After these pitiful attempts, one is less inclined to think discreditable the means by which

he at length succeeded—a present of £11,000 to the Duchess of Kendal, the mistress of King George I. But even so his restoration was not complete: for Walpole resisted to the end, and though Bolingbroke won the right to his possessions, he never gained again his seat in the Upper House. Once more in England, he settled down at Dawley, the centre of a brilliant set of men, the beginning and the middle, and the end of whose political creed was this—Walpole must be destroyed.

Walpole's self-reliance, to use no stronger word, was not entirely a source of strength. It meant of necessity that many elements of the national life were excluded from the Government. First of all, there stood aloof the disappointed Whigs, headed by Carteret and Pulteney. If the masterfulness of the Minister drove this section out, his unheroic outlook was repulsive to those younger members of the party like Lyttelton and Pitt, whose political ambitions were starved by the diet which he had to offer them.<sup>1</sup> There were the Hanoverian Tories, who took

<sup>1</sup> Walpole named them "The Boys."

their orders from the grave Sir William Windham. Lastly, cold and remote sulked the Tory Jacobites, politically negligible since the banishment of Atterbury. The quick wit of Bolingbroke evolved a policy at once. He must unite against "the premier" the first three of these bodies. In this way, for the first time in English parliamentary history, was formed "an opposition"; and it was Bolingbroke who laid as a primary duty upon it, and upon all oppositions that have since appeared—the duty to oppose. On 5th December 1726 was published the first number of *The Craftsman*, a paper which was to do for the Patriots, as they called themselves, what the Whig Press had accomplished for the Whigs. The contributors were numerous, but none appeared so often, or with such effect, as Bolingbroke and William Pulteney. Oxford, the home of lost causes and of journalists, provided the editor in one Amherst, who wrote well himself.

It was not only upon paper that Bolingbroke conducted his campaign. He laid siege to the hearts of those whose whim could unseat Ministers. The Duchess of

Kendal this time could avail him nothing with the King ; but he had two strings to his bow, and had won over Mrs. Howard, of whom the Prince of Wales was enamoured. Therefore, on the death of George I. in 1727, Walpole trembled for his safety ; the followers of Bolingbroke were correspondingly exalted. But the death of monarchs was always for Bolingbroke a presage of ill-fate. Strange to say, it was the wife and not the mistress who was to guide George II. at this crisis ; and, as she was for Sir Robert, Bolingbroke's chance had come, and he had lost it. To quote the words he used when he was balked for the first time, " Lord ! what a world is this, and how does fortune banter us ! "

The opposition continued to oppose ; but this set-back had its effect upon the solidarity of the coalition. It was not to show at first, and, for a time, they continued to hamper Walpole with success. Their greatest triumph came in 1733 with the rejection of Walpole's Excise Bill. The years 1730 and 1731 saw the publication by Bolingbroke in *The Craftsman* of his " Remarks on the History of England."

In this, under the guise of historical narrative, he produced a biting satire upon current political events. In 1732 he wrote his *Dissertation upon Parties*, which we shall require presently to discuss. But it was an uphill fight; to the seeing eye, the Patriot Party was in dissolution. It had allowed itself to be disheartened by the lack of obvious and palpable success; and did not perceive the enormous, but less obvious, success, that it had had upon the nation. In 1734 the Tories failed in an attempt to repeal the Septennial Act. Disunion fed upon ill-fortune; and at length Bolingbroke realised that Carteret would leave the sinking ship as soon as he had received an offer from the Government. In 1735 Bolingbroke abruptly left the country. If he did not actually despair, at least something near akin to despair must have filled his mind, as he set out for France.

There he devoted himself to letters. In the politics of England he was to appear but once again. The Patriot coalition still hung together; and in 1738 the influence of Walpole was declining. The King and Frederick, Prince of Wales,

were at loggerheads. To the latter, Bolingbroke addressed his best-known work, *The Idea of a Patriot King*. It is the marrow of his political ideas ; and is a last attempt to provide a rallying-ground for his old comrades. That done, he returned once more to France. In 1742 he heard of Walpole's fall. Nineteen years it had taken to bring the quarry down ; and he, who had first "hullooed on the pack," returned to view the kill. He was to meet a bitter disappointment. He was to find that the suspicions were well founded that had driven him to France in 1735. For, now that Walpole was removed, Carteret and Pulteney gave up the Patriots and took office once again with Pelham and the Whigs. Pitt and the Hanoverian Tories were excluded.

There remained to Bolingbroke ten years of life, but his friends were gone, and his existence was not happy. In 1751 he lost his wife ; in the next year he died himself.

"The strong man with the dagger is followed by the weaker man with the sponge." In these words Lord Aeton characteristically condemns historical whitewashing. This essay will not



attempt to whitewash Bolingbroke. Rightly to estimate his life, it is not necessary to paint him in heroic colours ; to exonerate him, for example, as Mr. Sichel<sup>1</sup> does, for the treatment of his first wife, by showing that he loved his second. We would in all modesty suggest that it is equally misleading to assume with Lord Morley, that, in praising Bolingbroke, one is perforce attacking Walpole. One may appreciate the great part played by the latter, both in the political and constitutional history of this country, and yet admit that Bolingbroke stood for a valuable point of view.

Reflection upon the doctrine of Bolingbroke will show its double nature ; it was at once a destructive and constructive creed. It was destructive because it taught the Tories to give up their Jacobite

<sup>1</sup> This is hardly to do justice to Mr. Sichel. His life of Bolingbroke presented to the public a new conception of that statesman's life ; and the views that he put forward have not been controverted by those that have written since. *Vide* Mr. A. L. Smith's article (*Cambridge Modern History*, vol. vi. ch. xxiii.): or *Personal and Party Government*, ch. i., by that acute critic of eighteenth-century history, Mr. D. A. Winstanley. See also the latter's *Lord Chatham and the Whig Opposition*, Camb. Univ. Press, 1912.

ideals. It is easy to write this ; and one might pass on, content to think that what is easily described is equally easy to perform. It is not so at all. When one is dealing with a mass of men, it is comparatively simple to convince them that their logic or their powers of calculation are at fault. It is another thing to strip them of their loyalty to a cause in misfortune or a person in distress. " Robin and I are the only honest men in England ; he is for King George and I am for King James." Such was the pronouncement of " honest " Shippen, the stout and constant Jacobite. Anyone who knows a certain type of man, the bluff reactionary bore, the despair of all who wish to make a cause progressive, will appreciate Bolingbroke's performance.

The constructive side of Bolingbroke's philosophy is unfolded in his *Dissertation upon Parties* and in his *Idea of a Patriot King*. The former is the abler work, reaching the highest flights of eloquence. The latter is the better known, though much rubbish has been talked about it. Bolingbroke traced the history of the Cavalier and Roundhead party from

the earliest times, until in 1688 the distinction between them became meaningless. For in that year the danger, which confronted England, broke down the barrier, and united all but cranks and knaves in one national or Country Party. This made the Revolution settlement. That settlement contained ideas precious to all free Englishmen; and these ideas may be called "The Constitution." "A Country Party" will always be the guardian of "The Constitution," and knaves, who for their own profit wish to break away from these ideas, will always try to split the "Country Party" into its component parts, and restore once more a situation that has passed away. What happened at the Revolution of 1688 might have happened at the Restoration of King Charles II. But that monarch gladly saw the old parties—Cavalier and Roundhead—spring into being once more under their new names—Tory and Whig; and, while they squabbled over the old issues, worked his will. Similarly, Walpole proclaimed himself a Whig, filching from the Country Party all who had not the wit to detect his craftiness.

Under Walpole's numbing leadership the fruits of the Revolution were being thrown away ; and opportunity was being given to the great Whig oligarchy to establish their selfish tyranny. A measure of freedom gave birth to the dominance of a caste ! Strange paradox ! clear to us nowadays ; hidden to the eighteenth and early nineteenth century politicians and historians of England, themselves either descendants of the great Whig Houses or blinded by their glory ; pointed out nevertheless by Bolingbroke, who lived at the time of these events, when the issues were concealed.

Bolingbroke saw that while the game was Hanoverian against Jacobite, the latter could not hope to win. So long as the Tories were wedded to a fad, they could not make a fight against the Whigs. Only by becoming a national party, not the party of a clique, had they any chance of playing their due part in English political life. The Tories had to give up much which to those of them that did not think might seem part and parcel of their creed. In every age Tory thinkers must perceive that the Jacobitism, against

which Bolingbroke fought, has its counterpart in many theories dear to the old guard. That for the Tory, possibly for the Radical too, is the abiding lesson of Bolingbroke's career.

But the necessity for such a lesson is always more urgent where the Tory party is concerned. Radicalism is the natural home of ignorant rashness and of selfish discontent: Toryism that of obscurantist reaction and the selfishness of vested interests. The latter are the less excusable even as they are the more ignoble. Of those who have much, much shall be required. Both parties have shown time after time that they can stand for something far higher than these their baser elements. One cannot rise from a study of this supreme example of a reconstruction of the Tory party without reflecting on the necessity from time to time of such a reconstruction, and without wondering whether there does exist to-day a life-giving, a revivifying marrow to the Tory doctrine, which it is well to understand before that doctrine is rejected. This fundamental source of strength exists indeed and takes on, I think, three aspects.

It may be considered first of all as an abiding criticism and rejection of the utilitarian canon, at any rate as that canon is usually interpreted. In other words, as a perpetual warning that the State, no less than the individual, does well to fear lest it do evil in order that good may come. It may be considered, secondly, as a distrust of sectional control whatever the merits may be, however righteous the demands, of the section which is in question. This distrust will find embodiment in the old belief in the safeguard provided by historic institutions, and it will base that belief on an insistence that historical evolution is capable of providing checks, the necessity of which any given generation may be unable to realise; and the fairness of which any one interest (however great) may unduly depreciate. Lastly, it may take the form of emphasising the importance of national duties every bit as much as, indeed possibly more than, the importance of emphasising national well-being. The opposite conception, which has always been a characteristic of English Radicalism, accounts for the greater attention paid by

Radical brains to home than to foreign politics.

These are principles put into practice by the three statesmen, whose life-work will occupy our attention in the remaining lectures. These principles we shall have occasion to discuss at greater length in due course: and they are principles which at least enshrine so much truth as to make it a profound national disaster when they fail either to find expression in an efficient party or to be its conscious inspiration.

## II

### EDMUND BURKE

THERE is an old saying that everyone at some time or another in his life has felt the fascination of Napoleon, and has formed the resolution to make a systematic study of his character. Of perhaps no other individual in modern times can it be said that his genius in its appeal does in this way break through all bounds of time, of national prejudice, and the inexorable law of changing modes of thought. The Anglo-Saxon races have their national heroes, but in the very fact that they are national they never can be cosmic. For our unbroken continuity of thought and the orderly development of our institutions we have to pay this price at least, that running through our statesmen and our philosophers, however daring and original, there is still a similarity. Their theories and their actions must all



have reference to a definite tradition. It hems them in on every side like the air they breathe; they accept it with no conscious effort as men in the ordinary intercourse of life accept the Euclidean conception of Geometry.

I cannot claim therefore for Edmund Burke that a comprehension of the value of his teaching will be by necessity, indeed by nature, the possession of all races and of every age. I do claim for him a permanent and a pre-eminent place among political philosophers so long as Anglo-Saxon institutions and Anglo-Saxon conceptions of government endure. I can conceive that five thousand years hence, be the dominant civilisation at that date Aryan or Mongol, or even Hamitic, Napoleonic maxims and methods will be as *actuel* as they are to us to-day. But the phrases of Burke will be meaningless unless that civilisation has found means to incorporate, and language to designate, such conceptions as are aroused in us by the phrases—Constitutional Liberty, Habeas Corpus, and what Professor Dicey terms “the rule of law.”

The public life of Burke is very speedily

related. He was born in Dublin in 1729. He entered Parliament in 1765, becoming private secretary to Lord Rockingham, Prime Minister from that date, till in 1767 he was succeeded by Lord Grafton. North's luckless ministry began in 1770. It lasted twelve years, and Burke, M.P. for Bristol, made during these years the celebrated speeches on American affairs. North fell from power in 1782, and Rockingham, on coming into office once again, made Burke a member of his administration. Rockingham died in the same year, and Burke would not serve with his successor, Shelburne; but he returned to his old position—that of Paymaster to the forces—in the next, the famous Coalition Government. With the entrance into power of William Pitt in 1783 began the last phase of Burke in opposition. This period saw his Indian speeches, and the Revolution writings. He left Parliament in 1794, and died precisely three years later, on 9th July. There is an affecting description of his latest days from the pen of Wilberforce. "The whole scene is now before me. Burke was lying on a sofa much emaciated;

and Windham, Lawrence, and some other friends were round him. The attention shown to Burke by all that party was just like the treatment of Ahithophel of old. It was as if one went to inquire of the oracle of God."

The dry details of his career furnish surely little clue to the secret of this general reverence. Nor, as is the case so often in the eighteenth century, have you "sized up" a statesman when you have ascertained to which of the parties he belonged, and which of the leaders he followed. Burke's little space of ministerial office might even be omitted in a consideration of his life's performance. It is indeed round four great centres of activity that what is permanent in his work saw light. Bristol, America, India, and France are the sign-posts to any fruitful study of his doctrine. Each furnished a fresh opportunity for the application of his theory of free government.

Judged from this fundamental point of view, Burke's career forms an unbroken unity. It is not the least service of Lord Morley to the cause of biographical truth that he has made this clear. But in a

sense also it must be pronounced misleading. The Burke of 1788 is a different person from the Burke of two years later. The Revolution marked as clear a turning-point for him as did the vision on the road to Damascus for St. Paul. Therefore it is possible to disregard his views upon Parliamentary, Colonial, and Imperial Government; and to concentrate upon his opposition to the Revolution. To leave out the rest, and to talk alone of this, is to do what is most useful in a systematic study of the growth of Tory doctrine. It would be indeed superfluous to take up any other line. Does an audience like this need a stranger to descant to it upon Burke's speeches on America? "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice!*"

He who would treat of Burke and the French Revolution can never get far away from paradox. Here is a philosopher treating of a matter which the best judges think he never really understood. Here is the author of the "Conciliation Speech" "drawing up an indictment against a whole people." Here is

the keenest-sighted statesman of his time anticipating by forty years the errors of the French Constitution mongers of 1830. And yet the “Reflections” still remain, I do not say the truest, but the most valuable, account of the portentous event which called them forth. The reason is not far to seek. Others have described with accuracy the numbing weight of privilege which the Revolution overthrew. Others have described that Revolution as an economic movement, and shown that France having found an economic equilibrium, thrones and constitutions outside France were bound in time to totter. But Burke saw into the eternal meaning of the Revolution, and his one-sided attitude argues only that unerring eye for danger which the mother-bird possesses.

What then was in danger? A specific form of liberty! The strongest link between the English-speaking peoples is to be found in the fact that they all approach their politics by the same—a legal—avenue. You will hear men say that the works of Shakespeare and Milton, of Emerson and Longfellow, form the closest tie between the United States and

England. For some this may seem true; but it is still truer to suggest that more has been done to form an Anglo-Saxon unity by the writings or the judgments of Hallam, of Stubbs, of Story, of Hare, of Gross, of Maitland; of Chief Justice Coke or of Chief Justice Marshall or of the Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. The Anglo-Saxon peoples look backward to regain their liberties, not forward to create them; and each separate person's freedom is secured, not by high-sounding general pronouncements, but by the provision of specific remedies for each infringement of it. It is an ordered liberty, built upon precedent and buttressed by the Common Law—this liberty which is the common heritage of English-speaking nations.

Four times in history these principles of government have had to face a serious attack. At the dawn of modern history, when mediæval Europe was destroyed, the modern nation States shrank into themselves, conscious for the first time of their own identity. Only a firm hand and concentrated authority could carry out the change. Thus it was the heroic age of monarchy, the age of Francis I. and

of the Tudors. Kings looked about to find a philosophic theory to support their power, and found it in the Roman Law. In France and in the continental countries the Roman jurisprudence was “ received.” In England<sup>1</sup> it found a law in occupation, fashioned by judges and by students into a progressive system, and intertwined at every point with the nation’s political existence. The struggle was intense, but the Roman Law was beaten; and the constitutional development of England proceeded on its course, marred by no violent disruption.

A hundred years were to pass before this orderly development endured its next attack. The unquestioned pre-eminence of the royal power was doomed by the logic of constitutional progress; but the constitutional experiments of the Commonwealth had no one in their favour but their own promoters. They were the logical result of violently breaking with the past; they were the logical precursors of that equally violent reaction with

<sup>1</sup> I am not forgetting that the Tudors, as Professor Pollard has made clear, entertained at the same time a great respect for the Common Law.

which the country hailed the second victory of Anglo-Saxon principles of government.

The third and the fourth attack were delivered by a single enemy, but the protagonists upon the other side were different. At the moment when the doctrines of the Revolution and the Rights of Man arose to threaten Anglo-Saxon freedom, there arose to combat that attack, on one side of the Atlantic, Alexander Hamilton, and on the other Edmund Burke. The danger was intense. The unbroken line of constitutional practice sagged visibly before the storm ; but the two great branches of the English-speaking race preserved their "ordered liberty." The greatest constructive statesman and the most penetrating political philosopher of the eighteenth century vindicated by the success of their life-work the right of Americans and Englishmen to abjure abstractions and *à priori* methods. What the doctrines of Jefferson were to Alexander Hamilton, that the French Revolutionary theories were to Burke. They were both used as foils to display in the one case the all-



transcending merits of the sagest constitution ever fashioned by the wit of man, and in the other the storied greatness of an ancient polity. Burke's description of the Revolution may be bad; but we read the “ Reflections ” not for mere description, but to see what rival system he thought good.

First, foremost, and fundamentally Burke propounded his theory of an organic State as a challenge to the theoretical and revolutionary constitution-framers, whose work in France he so abominated. ✓

“ Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure—but the State ought not to be considered nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern; to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a

temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the end of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular State is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place!"<sup>1</sup>

This is a statement of the fundamental doctrine of all Toryism—the organic, as opposed to the mechanic, conception of that aspect of society which we call the State. Into that society all men are born; and of that aspect of it, by the

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 229. I quote throughout the eight volume edition of 1852.

very fact of their existence, they become a part. From that natural obligation man cannot free himself, nor divest himself of his moral agency in a civil order.

“Now though civil society,” wrote Burke,<sup>1</sup> “might be at first a voluntary act (which in many cases it undoubtedly was), its continuance is under a permanent, standing covenant, co-existing with the society; and it attaches upon every individual of that society, without any formal act of his own. . . . We have obligations to mankind at large, which are not in consequence of any special voluntary pact. They arise from the relation of man to man, and the relation of man to God, which relations are not matters of choice. On the contrary, the force of all the pacts which we enter into with any particular person, or number of persons among mankind, depends upon those prior obligations. In some cases the subordinate relations are voluntary, in others they are necessary—but the duties are all compulsive. When we

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. pp. 460, 461.

marry, the choice is voluntary, but the duties are not matter of choice. They are dictated by the nature of the situation. Dark and inscrutable are the ways by which we come into the world. The instincts which give rise to this mysterious process of nature are not of our making. But out of physical causes, unknown to us, perhaps unknowable, arise moral duties, which, as we are able perfectly to comprehend, we are bound indispensably to perform. Parents may not be consenting to their moral relation; but consenting or not, they are bound to a long train of burdensome duties towards those with whom they have never made a convention of any sort. Children are not consenting to their relation, but their relation, without their actual consent, binds them to its duties: or rather it implies their consent, because the presumed consent of every rational creature is in unison with the pre-disposed order of things. Men come in that manner into a community with the social state of their parents,

endowed with all the benefits, loaded with all the duties of their situation. If the social ties and ligaments, spun out of those physical relations which are the elements of the commonwealth, in most cases begin, and always continue, independently of our will, so, without any stipulation on our own part, are we bound by that relation which we call our country, which comprehends (as it has been well said) 'all the charities of all.' "

The doctrine of "the rights of man" receives in these words a counterblast in the doctrine of the duties of man to the community of which he forms a part. ✓

With hardly less vehemence—indeed, it forms a part of this organic conception of the State—did Burke resist that disparagement of institutions implicit in an admiration of the French Revolutionary movement. He never forgot that English liberties had been obtained by sections of the English nation, each seeking indeed the redress of their specific grievances, but seeking it always through legal channels and by means of legal machinery. To

one impregnated with a conception of this nature, the action of the French seemed merely the handing over of their liberties to the first despotic character who should possess the genius to exploit them for his own aggrandisement. He shared to the full the Tory disbelief in the finite wisdom or finite capabilities of any one individual. He shared their belief in the power of tradition and of ancient processes of government to grapple with new situations, if only those inherited methods are rightly handled, and those inherited traditions rightly understood.

“Aberrations like these,” said Burke, speaking of popular revolts in the technical sense of the word popular, “aberrations like these, whether ancient or modern, unsuccessful or prosperous, are things of passage. They furnish no argument for supposing a multitude told by the head to be the people.”<sup>1</sup> And again: “When great multitudes act together under that discipline of nature,”—he is speaking of the dis-

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 471.

cipline of an organic nationality,—  
“ I recognise the PEOPLE. I acknowledge something that perhaps equals, and ought always to guide the sovereignty of convention. In all things the voice of this grand chorus of national harmony ought to have a mighty and decisive influence. But when you disturb this harmony; when you break up this beautiful order, this array of truth and nature, as well as of habit and prejudice; when you separate the common sort of men from their proper chieftains so as to form them into an adverse army,—I no longer know that venerable object called the people in such a disbanded race of deserters and vagabonds.”<sup>1</sup>

Burke's postulate then that the State is an organism is closely joined with two corollaries—an insistence on those duties owed by man to the organism which makes vital his personality, and the necessity for the expression of that organism in an organised society and in institu-

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 467.

tions. This belief and these corollaries form the motive power of that vigorous defence with which he warded off schemes and theories inimical to the English constitution. Before considering the value of Burke's teaching for the present generation, it would be well to grasp the method by which he put his theories to work.

Cynical as it may sound, the distinction between the Radical and Tory is best seen in the manner in which these two parties approach an abuse. Confronted with a rotten institution, the Radical is apt to say that the principle which lies behind it must be faulty. To the Tory it would readily occur that although this particular embodiment of the principle was surely wrong, the value of the principle might not be affected. For the one, all interest is centred in immediate reform; in the other, there is sympathy for established institutions and a desire to interpret their true meaning before their reformation is attempted. The very principle which the Radical rejected may, if properly interpreted, furnish in the end the instrument by which the evil features



can be removed from the principle's concrete embodiment. This distinction of attitude is as old as Burke, for it is to him that the Tory may trace this conserving, yet reforming, predilection. "A spirit of reformation," he said, "is never more consistent with itself, than when it refuses to be rendered the means of destruction."<sup>1</sup>

Further, in yet another direction did Burke manifest the historical tendency of his intellect. With Harrington, the author of *Oceana*, he remains almost the only English political philosopher who rejected the *à priori* method. Nothing can equal the scorn which he pours on the "metaphysician," or, as we should say, the theorist.

"It is not worth our while to discuss, like sophisters, whether, in no case, some evil, for the sake of some benefit, is to be tolerated. Nothing universal can be rationally affirmed on any moral, or on any political, subject. Pure metaphysical abstraction does not belong to these matters. The lines of morality are not like ideal lines of mathematics. They are

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 426.

broad and deep as well as long. They admit of exceptions; they demand modifications. These exceptions and modifications are not made by the process of logic but by the rules of prudence. Prudence is not only the first in rank of virtues political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all. Metaphysics cannot live without definition; but prudence is cautious how she defines.”<sup>1</sup>

He realised to a greater extent than almost any man, not primarily a statesman, that “the metaphysic rights enter into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, and are by the laws of nature refracted from their straight line.”<sup>2</sup> He saw, on the other hand, as few men do, who are not primarily philosophers, the necessity of looking behind contemporary politics to first principles.

In this rejection of an *à priori* method, in this reliance upon prudence as opposed to logic for the solution of political difficulties, Burke saw that the statesman could not stand alone unaided.

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 407.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 200.

“ We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason ; because we suspect that the stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages.”<sup>1</sup>

If this process of drawing on the bank appears to be a slow one, Burke accepted and even welcomed such a surface drawback.

“ It is one of the excellences of a method in which time is among its assistants, that its operation is slow, and in some cases almost imperceptible. If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom, when we work upon inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty also, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not bricks and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits, multitudes may be rendered miserable. But it seems as if it were a prevalent opinion in Paris, that an unfeeling heart, and an undoubting

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 222.

confidence, are the sole qualifications for a perfect legislator. Far different are my ideas of that high office. The true lawgiver ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself. It may be allowed to his temperament to catch his ultimate object with an intuitive glance, but his movement towards it ought to be deliberate. . . . If I might venture to appeal to what is so much out of fashion in Paris, I mean to experience, I should tell you, that in my course I have known, and, according to my measure, have co-operated with great men ; and I have never seen any plan which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the person who took the lead in the business. . . . From hence arises, not an excellence in simplicity, but, one far superior, an excellence in composition.”<sup>1</sup>

No man, not even a Burke, can abstract his teaching altogether from the method

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. pp. 289-290.

of expression most congenial to the age in which he lives. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, for example, assume a social contract not indeed because they really credit it, but because contemporary thought was prepared, or rather anxious, to take that as a starting-point for argument. Recent writers, historical, didactic, philosophic, have used the phraseology and employed the terms of the evolutionary theory. That phraseology and these terms are even now attacked. This caution, applicable to the authorities of every age, does not invalidate their doctrine. It implies merely a vigilance of mind in those that study it, a readiness to exercise their faculties in unaccustomed grooves. It is this consideration which accounts for the adjective "old-fashioned," applied from time to time to Burke.

In one sense Burke was indeed old fashioned. He employs an English style which to modern taste appears exuberant. But along with the employment of this style—which cuts him off only momentarily from the public of to-day, there is another feature which may seem more

serious. In hitting at the Revolution, had Burke seized upon the real enemy? Did he not mistake for this, phenomena pressed no doubt irresistibly upon his notice, but possessing on an ultimate analysis only ephemeral importance? Has the logic of history proved Burke's description of the Revolution wrong, and his conclusions vain?

If you go to certain history schools in England, you will learn that the French Revolution as a turning-point of history was only approached in importance by the creation of the world itself. It is described as the crucible of history into which were tumbled helter-skelter all the national traditions, civilisations, and politics of pre-revolutionary Europe, and from which the modern world emerged. This glorification of the Revolution as the source of "a tendency" is perhaps natural after the confusion of treatments to which that event has been subjected. It has been treated as a background to certain striking personalities, as a stage in the logical development of French Constitutionalism, as a frantic period of "un-law." It is but owed the poor creature that it

should have a natural and dignified personality allowed to it at last. Hence the overwhelming importance attached to it in modern histories.

Looking away from these perhaps "metaphysical" disputes as to its importance, it is possible to say that there was a parallel, an equally vital movement which Burke hardly at all considered. Dr. Cunningham has pointed out that the last quarter of the eighteenth century was the natural period in which to trace the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. It is useless to debate the relative importance of industry and of ideas, of the trans-Siberian railway and of modern France. It is at least beyond dispute that the problems to which modern governments are bound to find an answer are primarily not political but economic. It remains, therefore, to see whether the teaching of Burke has any message for a generation, the life-blood of which is the ebb and flow of trade and industry, the arteries of which are the arteries of commerce. To put it in another way, I have now said, and I have tried to illustrate, that Burke grasped, if only after the manner of his generation,


almost all those tenets which are necessarily fundamental in a Tory philosophic outlook. It is now the place to see how far there is an alteration of conditions, and how far consequently Burke's tenets are still capable of such statement as to have any meaning or force in our own time.

In another lecture I shall try to criticise in another connection the utilitarian canon for government, as that canon is commonly interpreted. But apart from this criticism, is there not permanently a real limit to the degree in which expediency, even of the very noblest order, can be accepted as an ubiquitously justifying principle? Are there no rights, for example, of private property, with which the State has no moral justification for interfering? I do not wish in this connection to press the right of each individual to the fruit of his own industry or ability. Nor do I wish to criticise at any length the common argument from the fact that apart from Society such fruit would not exist. As a matter of fact, I have always believed that this argument somewhat minimises the significance of the counter-payment by the individual as a unit of



Society, and the opportunity which he is helping to provide for others in a degree which increases with his own success. Moreover, I think that in the common use of this argument, there is an illegitimate assumption that a debt owed to Society may, as a matter of course, be credited to the State, which is not, as Burke pointed out, Society itself, but only one aspect of it. Is it not conceivable, for instance, that an individual's debt to Society may be paid in other ways than in the coin of the realm, or to the State Exchequer? Whatever the debt to Society may be, it does seem to me that the State is none the less in the presence of a real right; and that it runs the risk of a real immorality, if with the best intentions in the world too much is taken by it.

I do not want to discuss here and now the abstract necessity of private property in some degree, or to summarise the well-known argument that because the real unit of Society is, and should be, not the individual but the family, private property is a vitally necessary institution. Rather I want to put forward a quite different consideration, one



in the light of which much of modern legislation takes on a rather new appearance. I mean the moral obligation on all individuals, and on any society, not to falsify expectations which it has made legitimate by express permission or by tacit consent.

“When men are encouraged to go into a certain mode of life by the existing laws,” writes Burke,<sup>1</sup> in giving a particular instance of this general principle, “and are protected in that mode as in a lawful occupation . . . I am sure it is unjust in legislature, by an arbitrary act, to offer a sudden violence to their minds and feelings.”

Now this view of legitimate expectation is a principle of fundamental honesty, and it is in real danger to-day. It is not infrequently ignored when the administration interferes to condone breach of contract because of a supposed unfairness, which admittedly does not approximate to such gross inequity as to lead to a possible voidance at Common Law. Of course, it should be added, if such gross inequity did arise, the voidance of the

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 279.

contract would itself be brought within the field of legitimate expectation ; but too often Governments are found interfering with no trace of such excuse.

It is also in this neglect to safeguard lawful expectation, which the modern State has sanctioned and fostered, that there lies the real injustice and iniquity of many current attacks on property. If I am right in saying this, then on the one hand it does not preclude, and it is necessary to remember that it does not preclude, the State from nationalising property ; on the other hand, it does require that this shall be done after such warning, or with such compensation, as not to falsify the legitimate expectations of all those individuals in possession when the change occurs.

I doubt if any moral basis can be advanced for property which carries one further than that ; but I believe that it is morally wrong to concede one tittle less. I venture to think that the concession of so much would remove any real sense of injustice as well as any real injustice itself.

Let me put shortly one final point, because it illustrates another ancient

difference between the Radical and Tory point of view. If what I have said is true, it is no reply to say that the continuance of private property, if only for an extra week, does harm and causes injustice; and that this reflection must outweigh any safeguarding of expectation. It may be true that every hour of private property's existence is a crucifixion hour for mankind. Even that does not justify precipitancy. It is not lawful to do evil that good may come from it.

As a matter of fact, to the Tory precipitate action would not only be wrong but inexpedient. He insists on what the Liberals, without denying, always tend in practice to ignore—that it is essential to preserve for individuals the right to abuse what is their own, in order that they should have the opportunity to desist from doing so. A Society based on a different principle has neglected in the eyes of the Tory an important instrument for training character. All down the ages there have been those whose primary concern in making laws is to prevent the existence of a wrong state of things. To others, the ideal has been not to prevent a

wrong state of things, but to make natural a right. The Radical lays greater stress upon right action ; the Tory values more the formation of right character.

In some such terms as these I dare to interpret the message of Burke for this age. If the proud and ancient Tory party is once more to fill in the councils of the nation the place which is its due ; if the national life and the national activities are to enjoy the richness of diverse composition once again, then there is great work to be done. The Tory must draw upon the wisdom of our Fathers, he must select and he must reinterpret their sacred principles in a language understood of the people. There must be a Renaissance, a Reformation, a Reception of unexampled brilliance and of unparalleled effect. Away with the glosses of the Radical commentators, away with the books about books. "Man kann nichts anders," "Back to Burke," "An open Burke." He must be the Bible of the pure and reformed Conservatism, which alone can oust the misguided if generous proposals of the modern Radicals, and meet and solve the problems which have given those proposals motive force.

### III

#### DISRAELI

I WISH to-day to invite your attention to perhaps the greatest of all Tories, Benjamin Disraeli. It is a far cry from Bolingbroke and Burke to Disraeli; from England in the age of Anne and the Georges to the England which has scarcely passed away. Yet it needs no daring effort of imagination to see more than one point of resemblance between these men. They passed their lives for the most part in opposition; they are numbered, consequently, among those statesmen who are crowned not for a nobly productive period of office, but rather in that they have inspired men with a creed. Other examples spring quickly to the mind — Cobden, to catalogue no other.

Again it is possible to consider alike Bolingbroke, Burke, and Disraeli as literary men. Of Burke there is no need

to speak. Whether Disraeli's novels still<sup>1</sup> have any attraction for Americans I cannot say. I should guess that their brilliant wit, their gorgeous imagery, their historical interest, the political acumen of their writer, would all militate in their favour against what is of more purely local interest. But with Bolingbroke it is different: not even to my own countrymen has Bolingbroke ever made any widely successful appeal. I can then hardly think that the appeal has met with much response within this country. Forgive the effrontery of a stranger, and permit me to commend his writings to you. They contain specimens of the purest English eloquence; and I have heard good judges of such matters place even Burke below him as a master of our language. Bolingbroke, like many another both in the sphere of politics and literature, has suffered unjustly at the hand of Whig historians. The eighteenth-century grandees could not afford to let Bolingbroke's reputation live. And yet within that sphere at least, where politics

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1844, 50,000 copies of *Coningsby* were sold in the United States.

and literature meet, an irony so masculine, and yet so subtle, has only twice been equalled in England—by Dean Swift and by the author of *Erewhon*.

Bolingbroke and Disraeli were alike in the method of political speculation which they employed. They rejected the purely deductive method; they induced their political opinions from an interpretation of past history. Time after time, for example, Bolingbroke seems to speak again in the person of Disraeli; and the great trilogy of novels, *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*, is the *Dissertation upon Parties* cast in a different form and brought up to date. The resemblance, of course, is not accidental. Disraeli devoured the writings of his prototype and imbibed his point of view. It is none the less striking for that.<sup>1</sup> In one point alone were Bolingbroke and Disraeli poles asunder. Not even his bitterest opponent ever dared to bring the most trivial charge against Disraeli's private life. "As for 'love,' " he writes to his sister in 1833,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Vindication of the English Constitution, etc.*, pp. 185-188.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, p. 82.



“ all my friends who married for love and beauty either beat their wives or live apart from them. This is literally the case. I may commit many follies in life, but I never intend to marry for ‘love,’ which I am sure is a guarantee of infidelity.” Behold a touch of the cynical pose, much affected by Disraeli, which is so transparent and so characteristic of him that it strikes one merely as pleasantly amusing! His wife often used to say in fun that Dizzy had married her for money; but that, if he had a chance of doing so again, he would marry her for love. Certain it is that their married life constitutes a record of mutual tenderness not often paralleled. Every biographer has stories to illustrate this pair’s devotion. I shall not weary your ears with what can easily be found elsewhere.

Until recently Disraeli had not been fortunate in his biographers. Not every statesman can expect his Morley; but the books about Disraeli, with few exceptions, were antiquated, prejudiced, or trivial. A few years ago the preparation of the “official” life was intrusted to Mr. Mony-

penny, a gentleman who had behind him a distinguished career in South African journalism and on the *Times*. In South African politics of the last twenty years more striking personalities have been engaged than perhaps in any other part of Great Britain beyond the seas. Judging from his first two volumes, it has proved a fine training-ground for Mr. Monypenny in tact and discrimination. His second volume was published in November 1912. Then the ill-health, with which he had long battled, won the fight. To the cause which admirers of Disraeli have at heart his loss is very serious. After Monypenny's fragment,<sup>1</sup> Froude's brilliant study of Disraeli is no doubt most suggestive; but many of the judgments passed by Froude seem to-day curiously antiquated. O'Connor's life is spiteful. The article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, by Mr. Kebbel, is brilliant and sympathetic, while Lord Cromer has published a short sketch. Luckily, apart from all of these, there are Disraeli's published works, and no man ever painted his own portrait, con-

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above it has become known that Mr. Buckle is continuing the life.

sciously or unconsciously, so often as did he.

In what lay Dizzy's greatness? I think he made good his claim to greatness along three lines at least. Look at the difficulties which he had to meet; and, against these measures, the success which crowned his life. Then, far more than now, a Jew could only excuse the 'misfortune' of his origin by overwhelming wealth, or by success, so striking as to silence opposition. Disraeli never had a fortune. He was driven then to force his acceptance on a reluctant or indifferent public. The means he adopted were not exactly subtle. Here is a picture from the diary of Meredith, his friend.

"*March* 29.—B. D. to dine with me. He came up Regent Street, when it was crowded, in his blue surtout, a pair of military light-blue trousers, black stockings with red stripes, and shoes! 'The people,' he said, 'quite made way for me as I passed. It was like the opening of the Red Sea, which I now perfectly believe from experience. Even well-dressed people stopped to look at me.' 'I should think so,' comments Meredith,

who goes on to say : ‘ He was in excellent spirits, full of schemes for the projected journey to Stamboul and Jerusalem ; full, as usual, also of capital stories, but he could make a story out of nothing.’ ”

Every freshman’s year, I suppose, here as in my own University, contains its quota of—

Oiled and curled Assyrian bulls,  
Smelling of musk and insolence.

The outside world is apt to call them pert, but we know how much their buffoonery and prattle add to the amenities of academe ; and can judge them far more kindly. However that may be, the interesting point is this : that, whereas such characters generally end their days disappointed, lonely, querulous, and, almost without exception, hopelessly insolvent, in Disraeli we see a “ buck ” who has succeeded. In most cases it is the world that laughs last ; not so in this.

But Disraeli had something nobler than the quality of push, or the knack of successful intrigue. He understood, as only the great genius does understand, the mind of the ordinary man. It was this

Napoleon-like quality which taught him that there is no worse mistake than to think that the ordinary man cannot appreciate extraordinary ideas. The very contrary is true. The more ordinary the man the more surely may be found in him power to respond to an appeal large or daring in its conception. Simmering unexpressed in every mind, however humble, lie ideas that are generous and noble, which often cannot take form or reach utterance, just because the mind that houses them is commonplace. Great statesmen come to men thus harassed, and voice the pent-up aspiration, so that men recognise the proffered policy as something they have long wished to say themselves.

Now Disraeli added to this gift of imaginative insight a judgment unusually keen. He could and did fire men's imagination with a sentence, and yet the sentence was never totally grotesque. It was an irresistible union of the romantic and the practical. He threw out an idea so daring that it startled the brain and haunted the memory; and all the time the very forces of history seemed

to be working under his direction ! And this was the case, because, so to speak, his penetrating vision had taken him behind the scenes, and there he had seen the wires and knew how the puppets were controlled by destiny. Thus the great statesman became a seer and drew men to him ; not with the glare and clatter of a sudden rally, but silently, imperceptibly, and, in the process of time, because he was very patient and very wise.

This power of interpreting the general will has of course a perverted form, and, as such, has ugly names. " Tickling the mob," " coining delusive catchwords"—these are only some of them. Disraeli characteristically laughs at the perverted form himself. Tadpole and Taper, the scheming petty politicians, the twelve-hundred-a-yearers, as Disraeli calls them, find the ground cut from under their feet by the death of William IV. The party must be provided with a cry. The elections are at hand. Where is a cry to be found ? " Tadpole wanted the young Queen brought in." They were in despair.

" At length, one morning, Taper

came up to him with a slip of paper, and a smile of complacent austerity on his dull visage, 'I think, Mr. Tadpole, that will do!'

"Tadpole took the paper and read, 'OUR YOUNG QUEEN AND OUR OLD INSTITUTIONS.'

"The eyes of Tadpole sparkled as if they had met a gnostic sentence of Periander or Thales; then, turning to Taper, he said—

"'What do you think of "ancient" instead of "old"?'"

"'You cannot have "Our modern Queen and our ancient Institutions,"' said Mr. Taper."<sup>1</sup>

It was, of course, something very different to phrase-mongering like this that made Disraeli great. Imagination he pronounced the indispensable quality for a statesman; and in imagination he excelled. He recognised the powerful agent that lay to hand in the forces which created the romantic movement.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Coningsby*, bk. v. ch. ii.

<sup>2</sup> It would be interesting to compare the movement which Disraeli inaugurated in politics with the contemporary movement in the Church of England—the Oxford movement.

He took those forces into his employ. Each speech, each book presented to his audience or readers a fresh and arresting point of view. "For him," writes Monypenny, "in the political cosmos there are two great realities—the Throne at the centre, and the People at the circumference; and on the maintenance of their normal and unimpeded interaction, the health and balance of all depends. 'The privileges of the multitude and the prerogatives of the Sovereign had grown up together, and together they had waned'; together, also, they were to be redeemed from the selfish oligarchy which had usurped them at the Revolution, and the not less selfish and only less narrow middle class which had taken the place of the oligarchy at the Reform Bill."

This, as you can fancy, was strong meat for his generation. It was a new idea that the monarchy had any part to play in the English Constitution. Listen next to this extract from *Coningsby*.<sup>1</sup>

"'You will observe one curious trait,' said Sidonia to Coningsby, 'in the history of this country—the de-

<sup>1</sup> *Coningsby*, bk. iv. ch. xiii.



pository of power is always unpopular; all combine against it ; it always falls. Power was deposited in the great Barons ; the Church, using the King for its instrument, crushed the great Barons. Power was deposited in the Church ; the King, bribing the Parliament, plundered the Church. Power was deposited in the King ; the Parliament, using the people, beheaded the King, expelled the King, changed the King, and, finally, for a king substituted an administrative officer. For one hundred and fifty years power has been deposited in Parliament, and for the last sixty or seventy years it has been becoming more and more unpopular. . . . As we see that the Barons, the Church, and the King have in turn devoured each other, and that the Parliament, the last devourer, remains, it is impossible to resist the impression that this body is also doomed to be destroyed ; and he is a sagacious statesman who may detect in what form and in what quarter the great consumer will arise.”

Perhaps, as has been suggested, Disraeli

merely had it in mind to show the English people that it was perfectly possible to give a reading of history different from, yet just as plausible as, that reading to which they were accustomed.<sup>1</sup> A monarchy, restored and in close sympathy with the people's needs, was to be the instrument by which social reform should be introduced ; while Parliament, to the outward eye all-mighty, was warned that the days of its prosperity were numbered. Again and again this theory was developed by Disraeli, until there were few in England who had not been forced to think over their position. False and erroneous Disraeli's constructive theories may have been ; little enough he may have acted upon them himself when he had the opportunity to do so ; yet they were, and still remain, grandly provocative of thought. As a matter of fact, events may prove them not so ridiculous as they once appeared.<sup>2</sup> The power of Parliament has steadily declined ;

<sup>1</sup> Monypenny, *Disraeli*, vol. ii. p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> Froude, writing in the nineties, and still more Keibel in 1882, speak of Disraeli's imaginative forecast as interesting—*i.e.* surprising to his generation—but unfulfilled.

but it has been yielded, not to a rejuvenated monarchy, but to a despotic Cabinet, the decrees of which it obediently registers. Nor can anyone deny that, though the King is in no sense, and never will be, the depository of power, the part that His Majesty plays in the British Constitution has increased, and will increase. It is probably true, moreover, that this increase in the importance of the Crown has been immensely popular. As each of the great self-governing dominions becomes in practice more free from the control of the English Parliament, so it seems that the position of the King is the more stressed as the keystone upon which the whole arch of the Imperial system rests. Once more I quote Disraeli—

“Let us propose to our consideration the idea of a free monarchy, established upon fundamental laws, itself the apex of a vast pile of municipal and local government, represented by a free and intellectual press.”

The event has proved him false in detail; yet surely this aspiration is surprising. At a time when Parliament had

reached its highest point in popular esteem, he saw that its supremacy was doomed. If he did not see that England was to be merged in a far larger entity—the British Empire—at least he saw that its Parliament was to fall before decentralisation ; and that, in the process, the Crown was to be exalted. Again, looking to a different quarter of the globe, old men, who assisted at the Delhi Durbar, and heard decreed from the throne by the King-Emperor himself a measure which is destined totally to change the politics and history of three hundred million men speaking two hundred different languages, might well have chuckled when they thought of the silent old Jew with the penetrating vision and the quick imagination who made the Queen Queen-Empress and was thought mad for doing it. Disraeli's second claim to greatness then lies in his skill to conjure out of the midst of the future a vision which each day shows less fantastic.

I have put first Disraeli's views upon the Constitution. It was perhaps, as you may guess, in a different field that he made his more practical appeal to the electorate ; and a study of Disraeli, which left out

his views upon the economic issues of the day, would be lopsided. May I remind you of the state of England in the first half of the nineteenth century ?

During the Napoleonic wars England ceased to have internal history. The eyes of the statesmen, like those of the old sea dogs who were making history outside its shores, were fixed across the Channel. Among the fisherfolk of the southern coast we may still light upon a half-forgotten song, the refrain of which has reference to *Boney*. When the war was ended, and the danger gone, which had overshadowed Europe, men turned once more to questions of internal politics. But it was not the England that men had known before the war. It was already in the grip of the Industrial Revolution. It had been a land of agriculture ; it was now a land of industry ; and in the north the sky already glowed with lighted furnaces. The county aristocracy of squires rubbed shoulders on the Bench with a type of man unknown to them before ; their wives and daughters, when they went to town, found the smart carriages of a new and showy class in occupation of

the streets. It is a virtue of the English Constitution that it mirrors the changes in the nation ; and it was not long before this social revolution made its mark. In 1832 was passed the Great Reform Bill. By it a whole new body was admitted to the franchise—the great middle class. The passing of this measure was a staggering blow to the old Tory party ; new Toryism under Peel could not make up its mind what course it should pursue. The Reformed Parliament, now assembled at Westminster, shook its mane, and looked round to discover upon what it should first whet its appetite. It fell upon the system of Protection.

It was of course but natural. The farmers of England could never face the importation of wheat ; the Government till the Reform Bill had been in sympathy with agriculture, therefore the farmers had been protected by a rigidly excluding tariff wall. Such a system was inevitably doomed ; but the anti-corn law league, headed by Bright and Cobden, had schemes far more ambitious than the mere removal of agricultural protection. They made it their object to do nothing

less than throw open the markets of England to the world—to introduce that is a system of complete Free Trade.

“ ‘The wealth of the nation,’ the Free Trader of Manchester said, depends on its commerce. The commerce of England is shackled by a network of duties. The consumer pays dear for the necessaries of life, which he might buy cheap but for artificial interference. The raw materials of our industry are burdened with restrictions. But for these we might multiply our mills, expand our connections, provide work and food for the millions who are now hungry. With your Corn Laws you are starving multitudes to maintain the rents of a few thousand Elysians, who neither toil nor spin, who might be blotted off the surface of the earth to-morrow and none would miss them. . . . You say you must have a revenue to maintain your fleets and armies, and that it cannot be raised except by customs duties. Your fleets and armies are not needed. Take away your commercial fetters, allow the nations of the earth a free exchange of commodities with us, and you need not fear that they will quarrel with us. Wars

will be heard of no more, and the complaints of the poor that they are famished to supply the luxuries of the rich will no longer cry to heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

You will see that this admirable statement of the Free Trade position, which I quote from Froude, beginning as a conclusive argument against the Corn Laws, goes on to make of Free Trade something more than a political expedient and ends on an all but religious note. Disraeli, with that “genius for penetrating through names and appearances to the realities beneath,” that sureness of touch in destructive criticism, which constitutes in my judgment his final claim to greatness, knew very well how to deal with talk like this.

He saw at once that Free Trade was an instrument, not in itself an end at all. He attacked it indeed, because he thought it had serious weakness as a policy.

“My idea of Free Trade is this: that you cannot have Free Trade unless the person you deal with is as liberal as yourself. If I saw a prize-fighter encountering a galley slave in

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *Earl of Beaconsfield*, pp. 79, 80.



irons, I should consider the combat equally as fair as to make England fight hostile tariffs with free imports.”

He was determined that the Tory party should resist the glamour of the new evangel, and over this point he broke with Peel. You will find in the first volume of his *Selected Speeches* the philippics with which he assailed this statesman. Even now they make very entertaining reading. Peel passed the Repeal of the Corn Laws, but he split the Tory party, and was ousted from the leadership by Disraeli. Peel's desertion of the English farmers was avenged; it would seem then that, when the Tories under Disraeli came into power, they would be committed to Protection. And yet when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he introduced a budget in 1852, Disraeli made it clear that there could be no attempt to reinstitute Protection. Is this an instance of his inconsistency? I think not, on reflection. It was not Free Trade so much which was abhorrent to him. To him the enemy was the whole attitude and aim of the Free Trader. That endured after the passing of Free Trade; and he still fought it, although,

since England had flourished against his expectation after the abolition of Protection, he was not going to fight it any more over the question of Free Trade.

“Your Corn Laws are merely the outwork of a great system fixed and established upon your territorial property, and the only object the leaguers have in making themselves masters of the outwork is that they may easily overcome the citadel.”<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate aim, that is to say of the Free Trader, was to govern England in the interest of the Industrialist. No matter if agricultural interests were ruined; no matter if the English flocked from the land into the great towns, where they lived in congested discomfort. It did not matter, for the greatness of a country depended, in the eyes of the Free Trader, on her commercial wealth.

“I will venture,” said Disraeli in answer to all this, “to remind the House of the words of a great prince, appropriate to the occasion, for they

<sup>1</sup> Monypenny, vol. ii. p. 143. *Selected Speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. i. p. 57.

were not only the words of a great prince, but also of a great merchant—I mean that Doge of Venice, who, looking out from the windows of his Adriatic palace on the commerce of the world, anchored in the lagoons beneath, exclaimed: ‘This Venice, without terra firma, is an eagle with one wing.’ I wish to see our national prosperity upheld alike by a skilful agriculture and by an extended commerce.”

And again forgive me for quoting, for I do not know any better way of making clear what Disraeli had in mind. He was speaking in Shrewsbury<sup>1</sup> to his constituents—

“What I want, and what I wish to secure, and what, as far as my energies go, I will secure, is the preponderance of the landed interest.

“Gentlemen, when I talk of preponderance of the landed interest, do not for a moment suppose that I mean merely the preponderance of ‘squires of high degree.’ My thought

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. i. p. 48.

wanders further than a lordly tower or a baronial hall. I am looking in that phrase . . . to the population of our innumerable villages, to the crowds in our rural towns. I mean that estate of the poor which, in my opinion, has been always dangerously tampered with."

There was something in Disraeli's criticism; for what was the result of the dominance of industrial ideals as seen in 1845, in which year Disraeli published his finest novel, which he called *Sybil: or, The Two Nations*?

"'But, say what you like,' said Egremont, slightly smiling, 'our Queen rules over the greatest nation that ever existed.'

"'Which nation?' asked the younger stranger, 'for she reigns over two.'

"The stranger paused; Egremont was silent, but looked inquiringly.

"'Yes,' resumed the younger stranger, after a moment's interval. 'Two nations, between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy, who are as ignorant of each other's

habits, thoughts, and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws.'

“ ‘You speak of——’ said Egremont hesitatingly,

“ ‘THE RICH AND THE POOR.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

Listen, too, to a description of the manufacturing town of Wodgate<sup>2</sup>—

“ The business of Wodgate is carried on by master-workmen in their own houses. . . . These master-workmen . . . are ruthless tyrants; they habitually inflict upon their subjects punishments more grievous than the slave population of our colonies were ever visited with. Not content with beating them with sticks or flogging them with knotted ropes, they are in the habit of felling them with hammers, or cutting their heads open with a file or lock.”

<sup>1</sup> *Sybil*, bk. i. ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* bk. iii. ch. iv.

“The social system of Wodgate is not an unvarying course of infinite toil. Their plan is to work hard, but not always. They seldom exceed four days of labour in the week. On Sundays the masters begin to drink.”

“At every fourth or fifth house, alleys seldom above a yard wide, and streaming with filth, opened on the street. . . . Here during the days of business the sound of the hammer and the file never ceased, amid gutters of abomination and piles of foulness, and stagnant pools of filth—reservoirs of leprosy and plague.”

And what influence had these surroundings on the inhabitants ?

“‘Yes, sir,’ said the girl. ‘I be a reg’lar born Christian, and my mother afore me, and that’s what few gals in the Yard can say. Thomas (her husband) will take to it himself when work is slack ; and he believes now in our Lord and Saviour Pontius Pilate, who was crucified to save our sins ; and in Moses, Goliath, and the rest of the Apostles.’”

I have encountered much criticism of Disraeli's novels, but I never yet met complaint that this was overdrawn. Where did Disraeli see the remedy? Certainly not in legislation from the hands of those who had convinced themselves that the sole criterion of national prosperity was the condition of the nation's industry and commerce. To him it seemed that history had been once more repeated. The "glorious" Revolution of 1688 had ended for ever the pretensions of the King's prerogative, put forward by the House of Stuart. It had nevertheless established a tyrant just as terrible; and, instead of a free people, ruled by a free Government, there had succeeded the numbing despotism of the great Whig Houses, like that of Newcastle, and the parliamentary jobbery and corruption of the eighteenth century. Against this Disraeli, following Bolingbroke, never tires of declaiming. The great Whig families who squabbled for the spoils of Government, and crushed all trace of that freedom which they professed to represent, he called the Venetian oligarchy. William of Orange, in his eyes,

brought into England Dutch methods of finance, and all the while used England as his tool in the continental squabbles in which he was engaged. So much for the "glorious" Revolution of 1688!

The "glorious" Reform Bill of 1832 added vast numbers of parliamentary voters to the books; yet it still confined the franchise to those who were comparatively well-to-do. None of the poor, none of those who suffered by the Industrial Revolution, had a vote. It was the glorious Revolution once again! A liberal measure, ushered in with trumpets, to inaugurate the reign of liberty, sets up in reality an oligarchy, only rather larger in 1832 than in 1688! It was not to those who did not feel the pinch, that Disraeli looked for the ending of such misery, as he describes in *Sybil*. The small householder with the vote is not the man to pass a sleepless night considering the misery of the unenfranchised poor. Only in a combination between some central force like the monarchy and the enfranchised poor did he see any hope that the selfish oligarchy of the well-to-do and the respectable could be overthrown.



Only in the doctrine that the interests of no one class must predominate did he see hope of saving England. An active monarchy above all party squabbles, a generous-hearted territorial aristocracy bound by an obligation to their tenants, an enfranchised people—these were the instruments to be used in any true scheme of reform.

“Gentlemen, we hear a great deal in the present day upon the subject of the feudal system. . . . We have all heard how Mr. Cobden, who is a very eminent person, has said, in a very memorable speech, that England was a victim of the feudal system. . . . Now, if we have any relics of the feudal system, I regret that not more of it is remaining. . . . What is the fundamental principle of the feudal system, gentlemen? It is that the tenure of all property shall be the performance of its duties. Why, when the Conqueror carved out parts of the land, and introduced the feudal system, he said to the recipient, ‘You shall have that estate, but you shall do something for it; you shall

feed the poor ; you shall endow the Church ; you shall defend the land in case of war ; and you shall execute justice and maintain truth to the poor for nothing.'

“ It is all very well to talk of the barbarities of the feudal system, and to tell us that in those days when it flourished a great variety of gross and grotesque circumstances and great miseries occurred, but these were not the result of the feudal system ; they were the result of the barbarism of the age. They existed not from the feudal system, but in spite of it. The principle of the feudal system was the noblest principle, the grandest, the most magnificent and benevolent that was ever conceived by sage, or ever practised by patriot.<sup>1</sup>”

What a contrast between these views and those of the contemporary political economists ! What æons and æons away is the “ Laissez Faire ” of Adam Smith’s successors, or the “ Self-Help ” of Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. i. pp. 50, 51.

Samuel Smiles ! Duties, responsibilities, obligations, attached to the land—that to the constitutional historian or lawyer is the oldest story in the record of the English people. The Manchester school declared that the day of the landed interest was over. Disraeli, alongside the industrial, demanded for the landed interest its place.

Does what I have told you of Disraeli's doctrine leave you with the impression that it was bombastic and far-fetched ? Do you find rising to your lips the judgment that his teaching has no meaning for this age ? Do you feel impatient with me because I cannot show you actual achievement, the embodiment in legislation of at least a part of his ideas ? Do you complain that the vision of Young England remained the vision of precocious boyhood . . . full of sound and fury signifying nothing ?

It is no new form of criticism, if you do. Before you finally pass sentence, let me submit to you just two or three considerations.

If you believe that finality in political speculation is within the reach of any

individual, then I throw up my brief. Disraeli's outlook, with its manifest and manifold shortcoming, is quickly out of court. But it is wiser surely to consider the attainment of complete political wisdom as an age-long process, of which no man alive, maybe the descendants of no person here present, will see the end. In that process from time to time a giant will arise, who will bequeath to later generations an idea which has perpetual possibilities of development.

“ ‘I do say,’ writes Disraeli, ‘that my conception of a great statesman is of one who represents a great idea—an idea which may lead him to power; an idea which he may identify with himself; an idea which he may develop; an idea which he may and can impress on the mind and conscience of a nation.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

The ideas of that small band of Oriel fellows, who in the last century inaugurated a great religious movement in England, have many of them perished. But the teaching of Newman, and of Pusey,

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. i. p. 102.

has been shown capable of development by other generations than their own. We read the books of those who, since their day, have carried on the work of the earlier tractarians with new weapons and new modes of thought. We see that, instead of the stagnant Church and the all but stagnant ministry of seventy years ago, in every isolated village and every crowded city, in slums and docks and foul places that man has made most vile, there are now to be found a band of clergymen ready to spend themselves until they drop, and a constant stream to fill their places when they do. We see all this, I say, and who would dare to maintain that the Fathers of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England, with, as we now think, their crude and wooden doctrines, their running of a new idea to death, were not great thinkers for all that, landmarks in the development of thought? It is a reflection most pertinent when we set out to criticise Disraeli.

I do not think, therefore, that it is criticism of this nature that Disraeli has to fear. Lord Cromer, however, attacks along a different line; and those who question

the opinion of Lord Cromer, labour under the restraining reflection that it has not been their lot for twenty-five years successfully to grapple the thorniest diplomatic question of the last half-century. Lord Cromer blames Disraeli in particular for striking an ill-fated alliance between the Tory party and the "People"—a will o' the wisp, which was to entice more than one Tory leader from the paths of orthodox Conservatism. "Why," he asks, "did not Disraeli set about, as has been done in France, the formation of a class of peasant proprietors, likely always to be a stronghold of Conservatism?" Instead of this, according to Lord Cromer, he embarked upon a wild-goose chase, and he inaugurated the practice of tickling the mob, of trying by a policy of bribing Demos to outbid political opponents.

Is it, however, certain that the formation of a class of peasant proprietors is feasible; or, if such a class can be created, would such agrarian support alone suffice to bring the Tories in? If the latter question be answered in the affirmative, the Tories at once become the party of a

clique—a junker-party, like that which even the German Imperial Chancellor von Bülow had to tell to take its blinkers off. If it is answered in the negative, immediately the question must arise as to the reason which the Tory party must give for claiming to represent the non-agrarian masses of the people.

True enough it is that by the very theory, to which Lord Cromer takes exception, Disraeli's reputation stands or falls. It is his contribution to the Tory party; it is his contribution to English political philosophy. Mob-rule Disraeli feared as much as any man, and even applied to it the name Democracy,<sup>1</sup> which he contrasted more than once with what he termed "popular government." In this he saw the People, united with the Crown, buttressed by their institutions, able only by this method to resist a dominant clique that would enslave them. Here he joins hands with Bolingbroke; they both abhorred the Whigs; and an enfranchised People and a Patriot King were really instruments for the same

<sup>1</sup> e.g. *Selected Speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. i. p. 546.

purpose. One may abhor the doctrine, but then one must abhor Disraeli. Without it his life is meaningless—as meaningless as a character of Lincoln, drawn without mention of secession or of slavery.

You will realise, ladies and gentlemen, how much there is which I perforce have left unsaid. Disraeli, the Foreign Minister, who wrung from Bismarck at the Congress of Berlin the famous exclamation: “Der alte Jude, der ist der Mann,” the private life, the novels, the philosophic outlook—subjects all surprising and engrossing in their interest. Here, however, I have tried to give you a portrait in connection with his service to the Tory party. It will be well to sum up what that service really was.

Toryism, he pointed out, must never tire of protesting against the control of the nation and its destinies by any single class. That warning has an application most pertinent to-day. The problem can be stated briefly. Is opposition justifiable to the control of the country's policy and legislation by the Working Class, by that class which is immeasurably larger than



all the other classes put together? Appeal, of course, is made on many sides to the old utilitarian standard—the greatest good of the greatest number—as a basis for all government; and it is maintained by the Radicals that the political control of the Working Classes is a proper and a necessary corollary. If this is so, then Disraeli's conception of a national party, in the sense of a party controlled by no one class, is wholly out of date. But is this so?

There is not time here to attempt the whole discussion. To simplify it let me start from a principle which modern Radicalism is content to equate with that of the greatest good of the greatest number—I mean the principle of equality of opportunity.<sup>1</sup> One man is given ten talents, another two: does equality of opportunity mean equal opportunity for actual performance, or equal opportunity to do the most possible with the number of talents received? Toryism by accept-

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the whole conception of equality of opportunity I owe much to *National Revival: A Restatement of Tory Principle*, 1913, by an anonymous author; also to Mr. Hakluyt Egerton's *Patriotism*.

ing the latter interpretation stands by the doctrine of specialised vocations.

Now, if we have learned anything from modern educational science, we have learned that certain specialised vocations demand, or at least immeasurably gain from fairly early specialised preparation. To take a single example, this assertion is particularly true of that specialised vocation, which, for want of a better name, we term the governing class. The vital energy and efficiency of a governing class must consist in the fact that the vast majority of its members have passed through a specialised preparatory training. This will hardly be disputed if it is made clear that by the phrase "preparatory training" is intended all that may tend to foster generous self-confidence, not forgetful of the lesson of *noblesse oblige*. It follows that if you are to give a man who is fit to enter this class, whatever his origin by birth, the fullest opportunity to use his talents, you must provide him with this preparatory training. A man fitted rather to be a ploughman does not need it; a potential painter needs a training totally distinct.

Many Radical thinkers will admit the force of this consideration, but would prefer that all should start alike, and that the right man for each vocation should be selected rather later. As regards the painter or the poet this is probably the least objectionable method. But the analogy between the governing class and these vocations cannot be pressed too far. Subject to certain very serious qualifications, but still, on the whole, our system of classes represents the effect of selection by the capacity to govern; and so far as this capacity to govern is concerned as a habit of mind, the quite early training really matters. If then we are to try to give men not equal scope for actual performance, but equal scope to make the most of their powers, it becomes our duty to provide this early training. And because the upper classes have, speaking very broadly, been selected on this basis, and because heredity is no Tory invention but a scientific fact, a class system, as I here intend that phrase, becomes at bottom a moral and a real necessity. Before leaving this point it is a valuable reflection to remember that

in the English public schools are to be found an instrument for giving this preparatory training, parallel to, and no less efficacious than, nature's instrument—the Home, of which, as a suitable instrument for this purpose, so many members of our governing class will be by the accident of birth initially deprived. With their belief in the efficacy of institutions when properly interpreted, it is hard to see how a Tory Government could omit so to utilise, and in the process enormously broaden the English public schools. It is equally clear that in its treatment of them it would be guided by a policy of sympathy.

My general argument is patient of cruel misinterpretation. I hope that I shall not be misunderstood. No man can be blind to the deficiencies of our class system. There is need for greater fluidity, that those fitted for membership of the governing class may have far larger opportunity of rising, and that those unfitted may be less bolstered up. There is need of altruism, of much more widespread sympathy. On the other hand, if there is any truth in this point of view,

if in reality the ultimate right is not in equal scope for actual performance, but in equal scope for maximum performance, then a class system, and a largely hereditary class system, is morally right. It follows that it is morally wrong that one class, however large, should be capable of tyranny.

It will be urged that I stand convicted by the admission that the present need is to change the character of our class system. I do not think I do, although I cannot feel that belief too strongly. In England, at least, we have had earnest of class tyranny in the Trades Disputes Bill, the Minimum Wage Bill, and in administrative action. If Disraeli's life has any lesson it does show that we shall not remedy class feeling, or remove class hatred, by encouraging such tyranny, any more than by the all too frank appeal to class cupidity made by some politicians on either side to-day.

It is natural when on this subject to deal with a common taunt of the opponents of the Tory party. Alike ungenerous and conspicuously unfair, it is aimed at what is an essential feature of the Tory

system. I mean the accusation that Toryism bolsters up an Established Church, because that Church inculcates in men contentment with their lot. Those who know the Church of England, as it now is, can afford to treat with contemptuous indifference the ignorance or malice which believes it to remain the tool of the richer classes' selfishness. I quote the taunt not to contradict it, but because behind it there lurks a real truth, a real reason, that is, why Toryism is specially concerned with the defence of religion.

Both parties recognise class distinctions. Radicalism can seek to preserve the self-respect of the individual by saying that all such distinctions are immoral. Toryism cannot. At most it can say to individuals that they are wrongly placed. It cannot, speaking to the lower classes in a mass, say that most of them are wrongly placed. Thus only can the Tories maintain their loyalty to truth, and the Radical can rightly argue that it is injurious to self-respect. The way out, the only way out, lies in an insistence on the fact that class separation

and class difference is based, and must be based, on purely temporary values, and that there are other values. The Tory thinker knows, or should know, that, apart from this fact, his loyalty to truth is more corrosive of the nation's spirit than the fundamental misconception of the Radical. Toryism, therefore, is concerned to meet the political truths of the class system with the supreme truth that all such values are but temporal, and that behind them there are others which remain eternal. In consequence, it has of necessity a special obligation to religion.

It is in some such a way that I would seek for the modern application of Disraeli's teaching. The application is implicit in his doctrine, and if this reading of it is not strained, it is clear he is not out-of-date. Rather it seems to some he will remain the perpetual oracle of Toryism. Actual fruit he did not himself live to gather, but the victorious career of the Tories in the nineties was very largely his work. But it is not from this ephemeral triumph that he would draw that sardonic satisfaction, which in other men would take the form of gratified delight. Rather

he would place above that triumph the permanent revivifying power of his philosophy, that opening of windows for a mystified and groping world upon the constant principles of government.



## IV

### LORD SALISBURY

UPON other occasions I have discussed with you the characters and the careers of three famous English statesmen ; and I have tried to indicate that they were three examples of one type, that each had his contribution to that common stock of principles which the English Tory party exists to propagate. In Bolingbroke we saw the Tory statesman as a Party Leader. Burke I believe to be the thinker of all thinkers who have left to us commentaries upon Tory doctrine. Disraeli, uniting the practical qualities of a Bolingbroke with the perception of a Burke, thought out for himself once more the Tory point of view, and at the same time, in a series of masterly hints, indicated how it could best find application in the national conditions of the day. I trust that my

portrait of Toryism is taking shape before your eyes; but the background is still missing; and that in this concluding lecture I shall endeavour to supply.

English Liberalism has always laid stress upon the primary importance of national well-being. This was true even before the nineteenth century—the most useful age of Liberalism—and before Bentham, whose formula—the greatest good of the greatest number—it instantly incorporated in its creed. To the Tory it has always seemed more vital to remember and to cherish national obligations and those national duties which are involved by the existence of a family of nations, and by the consideration that national action does not take place *in vacuo*. Organised society is endowed with powers infinitely beyond those with which the individual is equipped; and if organised society is endowed with powers, it is to the reflecting Tory a mere truism that it has in an equal degree duties unknown to the individual. It follows that a portrait of Toryism is half painted if all reference to foreign politics has been omitted; and continuing the method, which I have

hitherto employed, I shall endeavour to show you Tory principles at work in the hands of a great master.

William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's great Minister, was born in 1520. His second son, Sir Robert Cecil, ended his life as Earl of Salisbury. Eight generations after, in direct descent, was born at Hatfield House in 1830 Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, who on the death of his elder brother, at the age of forty-four, became heir to this venerable title, which in 1789 had been advanced to the dignity of a Marquisate. One is drawn to a comparison of the Elizabethan with the Victorian statesman. Where personal characteristics are concerned, comparison is sound enough. There is the same stately presence, the flowing beard, the forehead, which once seen can never be forgotten. There is the same sagacity, the same caution, elevated by each into a constructive force. The very prodigality of letter-writing, noted by Mr. Winston Churchill<sup>1</sup> as a

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury wrote one hundred and ten letters to Lord Randolph Churchill alone, during the seven months of his first ministry. On 25th July he wrote

characteristic of Lord Salisbury, can be paralleled by the similar activity of Burghley, well known to students of sixteenth-century State Papers.<sup>1</sup> While in their libraries—the one at Theobald's and the other at Hatfield House—both statesmen were accustomed to make reflective reading and deep thought the foundation of their respective political activities.<sup>2</sup> But beyond these similarities of countenance or of personality it is unwise to go, and a comparison of their life-work must seem strained. History does not repeat itself, and the political situation in the reign of Elizabeth was exceptional.

The public life of Lord Salisbury may be

four letters to him, two of which cover five closely written pieces of notepaper. W. S. Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, vol. i p. 499.

<sup>1</sup> "Nothing was too trifling for him to take in hand, and he never seems to have been too busy to attend to the countless demands which were made upon his time." He would make countless memoranda. Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, vol. ii. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> "When it shall cum forthe," writes Burghley to the English agent in France concerning a pamphlet, "I praie yowe lett mee hauc yt, and any other pamphelletes of such-like nature, bicause I take them for my recreacon to see the diversitie of the humors of men" (British Museum, *Stowe MSS.*, 166).

divided into three separate periods. The first begins with his election to Parliament for Stamford in 1854, and lasts till he became Prime Minister in 1885. The second period, ending in 1892, saw him Prime Minister throughout, but for the sixth months' ministry of Mr. Gladstone in 1886. In the final period he spent three years in opposition, and then ruled supreme from 1895, until seven years later he handed over the reins of government to his nephew, Mr. Balfour. That is to say, that after an apprenticeship of thirty-one years he ruled England as Prime Minister for very nearly all the next sixteen. It is a career unparalleled in the history of English politics !

To speak of the years that elapsed before 1885 as a time of apprenticeship is, of course, to use merely figurative language. He was during this period twice Secretary of State for India, he was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and finally, in 1878, became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the last ministry of Beaconsfield, in which capacity he was one of the two English plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Berlin. Nevertheless,

using relative terms, he had not yet "been sworn of the mystery." As a party leader he was still untried; indeed, all members of the Tory party were as pigmies in the public eye compared with their great leader. Even in the Congress of Berlin the Foreign Secretary was second string to the Prime Minister; and Disraeli's "*We* bring you peace with honour" is an example, and was meant to be an example, of the royal rather than the dual pronoun. Moreover, an epigram of Bismarck, which quickly ran the circle of the Clubs, set the seal upon the tendency of the general public to overlook Lord Salisbury's ability. Looking back, it seems odd to us that it was so, but it is also true that we now see his ability most plainly in a quarter likely to be overlooked by the majority of his contemporaries.

It was Lord Salisbury's good fortune before he succeeded to the title, to be compelled to live in what were for his position somewhat straitened circumstances. Nor had his marriage—to the gifted daughter of a very gifted English judge—eased the situation. He was

attracted, therefore, by the idea of writing for the journals, an idea that has proved attractive before and since to more than one talented young man at the outset of his political career. The *Quarterly Review* is not always so fortunate in its young contributors. His first essay—on the Budget and the Reform Bill—appeared in April 1860. Between that date and 1883 he contributed no fewer than thirty-three articles, mostly—and this is more particularly true of the years 1860 to 1866—dealing with political subjects. The first essay scored an immediate success with that body of cultivated opinion in London which forms no unimportant fraction of the political opinion of the country. Still Lord Salisbury set his face against republication during his lifetime, and since the articles were not reprinted until the best six of them appeared nine years ago, they have not won the place in English political philosophy which their undoubted merits have deserved.

These are high-sounding terms, and they need justification. Happily, the merits of Lord Salisbury's thought and

writings are consistent throughout his long career, and are consequently easy to describe. In the first place, like all Conservative philosophers of eminence, he refused to consider any question apart from its historical connection. In the second place, he applied a relentless and penetrating analysis to the historical antecedents of any political problem he discussed. Thus in defending Castlereagh—always a prime favourite of Salisbury—from the charge of handing over Europe to the junto of monarchs which composed the Congress of Vienna, he lays stress upon the initial difficulties in forming that alliance of the Powers which after all had delivered Europe from “the modern ‘scourge of God.’” The difficulties had been overcome, mutual jealousies had been assuaged, the divergences of interest had been neutralised. It was absurd, he points out, to pretend that Castlereagh, considering all this, went into the negotiations with unfettered hands. Castlereagh had aimed at the overthrowing of Napoleon, and after his overthrowal, after the reduction of France to its ancient limits, at the securing of a lasting peace



for Europe. As a result of his perception, his patience, his courage, and his resource he did secure "that the peace of Europe flourished, undisturbed for forty years by one single conflict between any of the five great Powers who adjusted their differences at Vienna." It is true that the opening of the Foreign Office archives since the article was written has altered the problem in some slight degree, but scarcely at all in the direction of invalidating Lord Salisbury's spirited defence of Castlereagh.<sup>1</sup>

Again in 1863, by another article on Poland, it was made impossible for educated men to repeat glibly the platitudes that up to then had adorned, and indeed since have adorned, the textbooks. For the first time in the English language the notorious partition of that unhappy country was made to fall into its proper perspective. Lord Salisbury brought out at least three points—

(1) That the Polish "nation" consisted of a grasping, selfish, noble caste supported

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. C. K. Webster's article, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3rd ser. vol. vi.

by an increasingly vicious system of serfdom.<sup>1</sup>

(2) That vast portions of the territory of Poland consisted of land torn from Russia, in the moment of that country's greatest weakness, by the united crowns of Poland and Lithuania, and that there had been no one at that time to brand this piece of brigandage as "the greatest crime of modern history."<sup>2</sup>

(3) That from a moral point of view conquest may take on many different shades of guilt, from mere acts of piracy

<sup>1</sup> "The Poles are the only European people who in respect both to civil and religious liberty distinctly went backwards instead of forwards during the three centuries that followed the Reformation" (*Lord Salisbury's Essays* (Foreign Politics), p. 49).

"The memory of the persecuting slave-owners, whose corrupt and factious anarchy was trampled out by Catharine, is not a felicitous topic for those to dilate upon who are asking for the aid of free and order-loving Englishmen" (*Ibid.* p. 55).

<sup>2</sup> "Every circumstance that, according to the popular theory, should have protected the Poles against Catharine, should have protected the Moors against Ferdinand the Catholic—long possession, a great history, and the feebleness of imminent decay. But historical politicians, thoroughly familiar with the struggle of which the seizure of Granada was but the crowning act, refused to condemn a reconquest as if it was an aggression" (*Ibid.* p. 33).

like the conquest of Silesia up to conquests made in the course of efforts to repel unjust and unprovoked aggression; and that the conquest made by Catharine must be regarded as at the top of this classification, not at the bottom.

What is the effect of this argument? Cutting away at the root the sentimental and hysterical views of contemporary Liberalism, Lord Salisbury opened the way for a calm consideration of the undoubted grievances which the Poles were suffering. For it is not fair to represent Lord Salisbury as out of sympathy with the oppressed. He would, however, consider every problem historically—this is the chief lesson that we learn from the contemplation of the first period of his life. To that method he unswervingly adhered. Even when he gave the Presidential address at the British Association, it is the history of scientific progress, and the history of Oxford's attitude to science, which serve him for a theme.

Skip close on forty years and consider

this analysis of Liberalism pronounced in the evening of life.<sup>1</sup>

“ If you will look at the history of the Liberal party during this past century you will see that their great successes have been almost entirely upon one set of questions—to wit, those that concern parliamentary representation. On that subject, of course, the two parties have a different record to show and different claims to success to bring forward, but in this particular instance I think it must be admitted that the Liberal party were more with the current of their times, and therefore recorded a more remarkable triumph. But that enterprise has ceased because the material upon which it can be exercised has been exhausted. There is no more possibility of treating the representation of the People as a subject for parliamentary agitation, or as a cause for parliamentary success. The thing is done for. There may be still matters in respect of representation which may be altered, but they are

<sup>1</sup> 19th May 1899.

not of a kind to cause popular enthusiasm, and therefore it became necessary for the Liberal party to look for new pastures upon which to graze.

“Mr. Gladstone looked at the prospect before him. He seized upon the undoubted sorrow which afflicted Ireland, and in doing so, he, accidentally as it were, stumbled upon and awoke a sleeping genius, whose action has been fatal to his own success, and for the moment to the prospects of his party. When he wanted to separate Ireland from England he was not dealing with an ordinary question, but with the interest and safety of the Empire.

“And if it is possible within a reasonable time to cause again a bitter controversy by which parties can be divided into two well-marked lines, undoubtedly the question of property must be worked in. Property is marked out as the next object of radical attack when the Radical party resumes its activity and unity.”

I ask you to remember that these words were spoken in the flush of Conservative victory, when the Liberals as a party were hopelessly divided, and the Whigs among them, as opposed to the radical section, were still strong. The analysis has proved so accurate, the prophecy been so perfectly fulfilled, that it seems to-day an obvious pronouncement. It was not obvious fifteen years ago. Is it not the touch of the Lord Robert Cecil of the *Quarterly*, with perhaps the added inspiration of an aged seer? But this historical method was not a mere passive accomplishment; it could be too an active weapon; and having grasped exactly what it was, it is time to pass into the period of his premiership and watch it actively at work.

The year 1885 was a critical year for England. It is possible that even in the year of the Armada she ran less risk from enemies without. In his election address of 1886 Lord Randolph Churchill fastens the responsibility for this on Mr. Gladstone's shoulders.

“The Hero of the Transvaal sur-

render," he wrote, "the perpetrator of the bombardment of Alexandria, the decimator of the struggling Soudan tribes, the betrayer of Khartoum, the person guilty of the death of Gordon, the patentee of the Penjdeh shame, now stands before the country all alone, rejected by a democratic House of Commons."

Such language is, of course, absurd, but leaving aside for the moment the question of responsibility, the situation was sufficiently acute. With many of her best troops locked up in Egypt, England stood in European isolation. Lured into Egypt against her will, by force of circumstance, she had for every practical purpose taken over with France the conduct of that country's administration. It might have been wiser, though not really to her credit, frankly to admit that this was so. But that is not the way that England goes to work. Practically in control, theoretically not involved at all, her position was built on shifting sand. Helpless to prevent, she had in fact to reap the fruit of, the incompetent Khedival government. Thus in 1882 the protecting Powers were perforce involved in a dispute between that

government and the military-nationalist party led by Arabi Pasha. If it was not that English informed opinion seems to have misunderstood this movement from the first, it would seem just to argue that if the European Powers had been frankly in control the crisis, better handled, might have been successfully negotiated. As it was, the chance change of a French ministry left England to tackle the situation for herself. Even then the gods appeared to fight against her. The thunder of the guns at Alexandria announced to the world in a manner conducive to the maximum of friction that England had henceforth assumed responsibility for Egypt; and Sir Garnet Wolseley's masterly campaign settled any doubt that lingered round that question. The struggle ended, and Arabi in exile, the English Government returned to their policy of "make believe." The same causes once more produced the same results. An expeditionary force under Hicks Pasha, foolishly sent by the Khedive into the Soudan and not prevented by England, was cut to pieces in the desert. England, of course, might easily have pre-



vented its dispatch, but keeping up the solemn pretence to which we have referred, she openly protested that she had had no power to interfere with such lawful exercise of sovereignty on the part of the Khedive. There followed the London Conference of 1884, rendered abortive by the obstruction of the Powers egged on thereto by France; the Gordon mission to Khartoum; his murder by the Mahdi's troops; the fruitless expedition of relief; the evacuation by the Egyptian Government of the provinces of the Soudan. It was a bad day for the prestige of England. That is a fact of history, quite apart from foolish attempts to fix the blame for what had happened.

But it was not in Egypt only that the sky was dark. In 1882 the German Colonial Society had been founded. Within two years an anglophobe campaign had been inaugurated in the German press, and Bismarck, who had at first been none too friendly, gave this new development his blessing. More than this, in 1884 he concluded an agreement at Skiernewice between Russia and the Triple Alliance. To English eyes it meant that Germany

and Russia hand in hand would pursue an active colonising policy. From every side flowed in alarmist rumours to swell the English fear: German activities in Zanzibar; restless Boer movements into Bechuanaland backed, it was said, by German influence and capital; the steady Asian advance of Russia and an ugly dispute between that country and Afghanistan over the Penjdeh district. Indeed, England had hardly recovered from the news of Gordon's death when it was announced that the Russian forces had seized this strategically important post in spite of the fact that the Czar had admitted all along that it was Afghan territory. Lord Granville, Gladstone's foreign secretary, at this anxious moment could take no heroic measures. He was content to protest, and to assert with empty firmness the inviolability of the Zulfikar Pass, upon which the Russian leader turned a greedy eye. It was in London a time of tension, when men went out of their way to buy a late edition of the evening papers, and young officers at Aldershot rejoiced. Such were the anxieties, well-founded or imaginary, but

in genuine existence, which Lord Salisbury had to face when he returned from Windsor after kissing hands on his appointment as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.

Without fuss or bustle the new Prime Minister sat down to think out a foreign policy for England. It was not clear at once what that foreign policy would be. Men read in the *Times* that almost simultaneously with taking office he had sent a note to Russia warning the Russian Government to leave the Zulfikar Pass alone ; and the Simla correspondent of the *Times* had stories to insert of extraordinary meetings of the Governor-General in Council, of feverish activity upon the frontier, and of subalterns recalled from shooting leave. Otherwise there was no pronouncement from headquarters, and Afghanistan had almost ceased to interest the British public, when it was made known in the course of September that the Czar had yielded. Very quietly, but very confidently, Lord Salisbury had scored his first success. He turned next to the Egyptian tangle.

It was clear enough that England must

cease to be isolated, whatever it might cost. That opinion had been borne in upon Lord Granville, and had obtained the late Prime Minister's concurrence. Accordingly, as France proved obstinate, tentative negotiations were opened with Berlin, to which city Lord Rosebery was sent bearing the olive branch. Nor was his reception chilly. The famous Chancellor had steadily pursued peace in Europe ever since he saw, in the Hall at Versailles, that "blood and iron" had finished the task which he had set them. Moreover, while he had not a navy to defend them, he was bent on acquiring colonies for Germany. If England would assist, or at least support him in this attempt, he had no quarrel with her. When, therefore, Salisbury succeeded Granville he found an Anglo-German *entente* imminent.

This he was not prepared to seal until he had had time to apprise himself of the whole situation. For Prussia and for Prussian methods he had always cherished a dislike, ever since in 1864, with prophetic insight, he had denounced the part played by Prussia in the Schleswig-Holstein

question, as an attempt to secure North Sea harbours for a German navy.<sup>1</sup> Rather than approach Prince Bismarck he preferred to make one more attempt to recreate the Anglo-French *entente* which had disappeared with the fall of Gambetta. That his mind was working on these lines is clear from the fact that he sent an emissary to the Sultan, who actually concluded an agreement with him in 1887, by which the evacuation of Egypt was promised under certain conditions at the end of three years. The French ministers, however, proved unconciliatory, and this agreement was made void by their unfriendly attitude. Lord Salisbury now turned, as the Liberals had done before him, to Berlin.

Events had taken place in the meantime which made this an especially wise attitude. There were already signs of a Russo-French alliance, and Russian interference in the Balkans, together with the Boulanger incidents in Paris, showed that the solidarity of the continental hostility to England had been disturbed, and that Europe, divided into hostile camps, might see war

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Salisbury's Essays* (Foreign Politics), p. 68.

at any moment. In short, Lord Salisbury perceived that the best chance of avoiding an outbreak lay in strengthening the Triple Alliance. But he firmly refused to allow England to become its tool; and the English independence was clearly demonstrated by entertaining the French fleet at Portsmouth on their return from a triumphant visit to Kronstadt. So far did he carry this aloofness from the affairs of the three Powers that rumours were commonly current of a breach with Germany,<sup>1</sup> and had to be repeatedly denied. It was a genuine denial, for in 1890 was signed the famous Anglo-German agreement by which, among other points of less importance, England ceded Heligoland to Germany in return for greater freedom of action in the Protectorate of Zanzibar.<sup>2</sup>

Outside Europe, too, Lord Salisbury's government was active, even if its action did not catch the eye. In Egypt the withdrawal from the Soudan was endorsed<sup>3</sup> until such time as the finances of the country permitted once more a forward

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hansard, cccxlv., 1061.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* cccxvi., 1258.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* cccxxiii., 1420.

policy; while in South Africa Lord Salisbury also played a waiting game, unmoved by Jingo clamour.

Such was the work of his first administration. It can be best defended by using his own words—

“I ask you to judge the past by the present. I ask you to look at the last four years of our foreign policy and compare it with the policy of Mr. Gladstone’s government, and tell us whether peace and quiet, tranquillity and the absence of adventure, were characteristics of the first or the second of those two stretches of foreign policy.”<sup>1</sup>

“The best justification of Lord Salisbury’s policy between 1885 and 1892 is,

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Nottingham, 1890.

After his resignation, the *Post*—a German newspaper of the Conservative party—summed up thus the activity of his first administration:

“He laboured with shrewd deliberation to put an end to the errors of Gladstone’s foreign policy. When he became Prime Minister in June 1885 he immediately strove with all his strength to bring England out of the isolation into which, through Gladstone’s influence, she had entered. He tried before all things to improve relations with Germany” (the *Post*, 13th July 1902).

however, that he found Great Britain confronted by a hostile European coalition, a prey to innumerable humiliations and perplexities, and on the brink of war, and that he left her at peace, enjoying the friendship of all the great Powers, and pursuing her Imperial course with unfettered hands and undiminished lustre.”

That is the judgment of a shrewd contemporary writer.<sup>1</sup> It may be added that the policy of keeping aloof from continental engagements, while keeping in touch with continental Chancellories, was to stand him in good stead when in his second administration he, in his turn, was to play the part of Europe’s “honest broker.”

In 1895, after three years of opposition, Lord Salisbury returned to power. The next seven years witnessed his final and his fullest activity. His position was assured. He was the unquestioned leader of his party; and that party was in complete control of the destinies of England. Political memories are short, and it is hard for us to realise that in no manner

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Review*, No. 392, p. 665.



of vainglory and with perfect truth Lord Salisbury could say<sup>1</sup>—

“The dual character of the English parties is for the moment destroyed, and we cannot but feel that if this state was to continue too long we should be in danger of falling into that condition of parliamentary groups which is fatal to the constitutional existence of more than one parliamentary system on the Continent. I earnestly hope—I do not hope for their victory—but I earnestly hope that our opponents will get into fighting trim before long. I am sure it is bad for them; it is bad for us, and it is bad for the country, if they continue to occupy a position so little conspicuous and effective as that which they occupy at the present time.”

Truly “history is a splendid cordial” for the drooping spirit of present-day Conservatives! How was this overwhelming power used? The chance was greater far than it had been in 1885, and the use to which the chance was put was just so much the grander.

<sup>1</sup> Meeting of the Primrose League, 10th May 1900.

We have seen him as “the plasterer” in European politics; we must watch him as “the architect.”

An article, appearing just after his retirement,<sup>1</sup> brought out very judiciously the fundamental conceptions, which through this last period lay at the back of his mind. Prince Bismarck, he felt, had left no worthy successors, and had left a doctrine behind him which by less able men was very easily misunderstood. Europe was full of mediocrities controlling armaments never paralleled before. In almost every country these mediocre statesmen were at the mercy of enfranchised mobs fizzing with Jingo sentiment. Year in and year out he never ceased to sound a warning note.

“I have a strong belief that there is a danger of the public opinion of this country undergoing a reaction from the Cobdenite doctrine of thirty or forty years ago, and believing it is our duty to take everything we can, to fight everybody, and to make a quarrel of every dispute.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Review*, No. 392, p. 647.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, 4th ser. vol. liii. p. 43.

Or again—

“Moderation, especially in the matter of territory, has never been a characteristic of democracy. Wherever it has had free play, in the ancient world or the modern, in the old hemisphere or the new, a thirst for empire and a readiness for aggressive war has always marked it.”

Or again—

“If you keep the unofficial people in order, I will promise you that the official people will never make war. In our time the organised governments are distinctly losing force, and public opinion is distinctly gaining power.”

Finally, a few years before he died—

“Though governments may have an appearance and even a reality of pacific intent, their action is always liable to be superseded by the violent and vehement operations of mere ignorance.”

It is perhaps permissible to dwell upon these utterances just because it is impos-

sible to realise the character of this great man unless it is made clear that ever since in 1857 he voted against Lord Palmerston's action and the China War, he was the unbending enemy of Jingo and of Chauvinist. For this very reason he became the greatest friend among practical statesmen that the system of international arbitration ever had. He saw in this the refuge of the Jingo-harassed politician.

“A well-working arbitration system,” he is quoted as saying by the writer of the article in the *Quarterly* which I have cited, “would be an invaluable bulwark to defend a minister against the Jingos. It would be impossible for them to accuse him of having trifled with the honour of the country or with surrendering substantial advantages if he could say: ‘Well, I submitted the matter to an impartial tribunal as provided by treaty, and unfortunately the decision went against us.’”

Second only to his hatred of the Jingos—and in a way complementary to it—

was his abiding reverence for the law of Nations. In his case it really meant the law of Nations, and the Concert of Powers had in him a loyal upholder, whom no wave of momentary passion, no histrionic appeal, and no fad could shake. The gravest rebuke he ever uttered in the House of Lords was uttered to Lord Kimberley, who at Norwich in 1897 had urged upon the Government the necessity for isolated action in settling the affairs of Crete.<sup>1</sup> His resentment was not provoked alone by the fact that this blundering indiscretion—particularly heinous in so prominent a person—almost upset one of the most skilful diplomatic transactions ever completed by the English Foreign Office. In the words of Lord Salisbury, even as recorded in the prosaic pages of Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, we can read even now a burning indignation at the idea of this disregard of Treaties. By the Treaty of Paris, by the Treaty of Berlin as well, the statesmen of this country had pledged their word that all alterations in the dominion of the Turk should come up for the joint considera-

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, 4th ser. vol. iii., Session 1897.

tion of the signatory Powers. That was a national promise; and no sophistry founded upon sentimental or rashly buoyant philanthropy must be allowed to shake it. It was the same when in the affairs of Armenia rash enthusiasts urged that England should break free from that restraining and slow-working method, the concerted action of the Powers.

“Of course there is the method of isolated action; of course you can worry the Turk; but I ask you to consider very carefully whether you can prevent harm to Christians and Moslems alike in Armenia by it.”<sup>1</sup>

His sense of what was practicable, as well as his sense of honourable dealing, condemned action so precipitate! Those were hard days for Lord Salisbury, with ignorant enthusiasts to check at home, and foreign statesmen to manage on the Continent. It needed nerve and patience to satisfy the former by promising to gain the ends they wished with and by the co-operation of the latter. Sharing the ideals of Castlereagh, he shared his indomitable spirit; and harmonised these

<sup>1</sup> Guildhall Banquet, 10th November 1896.

two divergent, and in themselves conflicting, interests.

Will you think me ill-bred if I ask you to consider for a moment Lord Salisbury as a specifically English statesman? He knew how to call into his service the Imperial spirit newly aroused in Englishmen, and turned into an electrifying force by our Cambridge Professor Seeley and later by Joseph Chamberlain. But he remained its master. England had grasped the actuality of an Imperial future, and some Englishmen had set themselves the task of translating what was still a possibility into a cut-and-dried constitutional scheme. Better far than apathy, it was a proceeding none the less attended with the utmost danger. Lord Salisbury had sounded a warning note as early as 1896.

“ We all know how difficult it is to find any formula or statute for the federation of the Empire; but we yet feel that something greater than formulas or statutes is drawing the Empire together, is forming a federation which will be a reality before

the expression to denote it has been invented.”<sup>1</sup>

He returned to the subject six years later in the last public speech of his life. It has a solemnity in its stately wisdom apart from the circumstance of its delivery. The Imperial spirit had grown greater every year. It had seen concrete expression alike in the Colonial aid sent to the Mother Country in South Africa ; as in the answering response at home, of which Lord Milner’s successful attempt to enlist the young brain of our English Universities in the service of the Empire provides a typical example.

“ There are some very important men, men of great intellect and authority, who think that the moment has come for some legislative action which should federate the Colonies. I exhort them before they do so, carefully to consider what steps they are going to take and what results they may expect to come from them. We have no power by legislation to affect the flow of opinion and of

<sup>1</sup> Speech to Nonconformist Unionists, 1st February 1896.



affection which has risen so largely between the Mother Country and the Daughter States. They will go on in their power, their own irresistible power, and I have no doubt they will leave combinations behind them which will cast into the shade all the glories that the British Empire has hitherto displayed.

“All kinds of difficulties are there before us—difficulties as to the burden of finance, difficulties as to the duties of defence—difficulties as to the rights of decision which the Mother Country should retain, and unless feeling is running very strong, and we have a great force behind us, I look with some apprehension upon any attempt to anticipate events.

“The tendency of human beings, and of statesmen—who are also human beings—is to anticipate all such matters and to think that because their own wretched lives are confined to some sixty or seventy years, that it is therefore open to them to force an anticipation of the results which the natural play of forces

and of affections, and the alterations of the judgments, and the mutual feelings of the various peoples in the world will bring before us.”<sup>1</sup>

We must at the very least allow this to be the “sweet wisdom” of a generous old age, but it is far more. It is a prophetic anticipation of difficulties and their solution, which were not so clear eleven years ago as they are to the statesmen and thinkers and even the educated public of to-day.

It is impossible to omit consideration of Lord Salisbury’s work from yet another Imperial point of view. He stands pre-eminent as the “Empire Builder.” Under his guidance the last act was played in the drama of Egypt and South Africa. There is a dramatic contrast between these and the former Egyptian operations. On the one hand, the muddle, the waste, the conflicting instructions from Downing Street destined to find their end in what the nation has agreed to name “the betrayal” of Gordon; on the other, years of careful preparation ending in a clock-work expedition carried through with

<sup>1</sup> Primrose League, 8th May 1902.

meticulous regard for the practice of economy, and depending for its success upon the loyal co-operation of the three great leaders in control—Lord Salisbury, Lord Cromer, and Sir Herbert Kitchener. It is not a virtue which forces itself upon the imagination, but to read the report of the parliamentary debates through the Egyptian War, is to realise the model attitude of a government to its Commanders in the field; while the history of the period makes clear that the confidence was abundantly repaid. Finally, the century closed with a war which determined for all time that the territories, which now form the great self-governing dominion of South Africa, should not remain “a house divided against itself,” “but be all one thing or all the other.” And in the dark days of the South African War, when his firmness saved the State, Lord Salisbury too had “his crucifixion day.”

“What cannot and what must not be is that any great maritime power should get possession of Cuba”—that is an utterance of Canning in 1822, the young

Elisha upon whom the mantle of Elijah had descended. He was but giving expression to the "highways doctrine," a sacred tenet of English diplomacy in the nineteenth century. Let me give you an exposition of it by Lord Salisbury in 1864—

"Of the true policy of England there can be little doubt, for it has been upheld by statesmen of all sides in every age. As the greatest of commercial Powers, she can never suffer the highway of nations to fall into hands that may close it. The Sound, the Bosphorus, the Straits of Gibraltar, the Isthmus of Suez, the Isthmus of Darien, must never be subject to the will of a first-rate Power."<sup>1</sup>

Is the utterance of his youth borne out by the performance of his maturity? It is necessary to make clear at once that the precise contrary is true. In the Venczuelan boundary dispute during President Cleveland's administration, in the face of heated feeling, Lord Salisbury welcomed the intervention of the United

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Salisbury's Essays* (Foreign Politics), p. 143.

States. In the war with Spain, although it was apparent that Cuba was the prize, what European nation more than England took the side of "the great maritime Power of the New World." Finally, when the American Government, anxious to carry out the logical consequences of the adoption of Welt politik, found itself balked at every turn by the restrictions of a previous agreement, was it not Lord Salisbury who tore up the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty?

These are no unimportant acts of courtesy, but deliberate and concrete acts of friendship. There was more in them, too, than a graceful recognition of what seemed to him inevitable; nor were they merely speculative investments in the stock of American goodwill. The abortive arbitration treaty, for which he was responsible, indicates that he really did believe that the two English-speaking peoples, alike in their conception of the fundamental principles of government, shared too a great responsibility if they did not work as one. With that end in view he tore up past principles of British policy, and in season and out educated

the public opinion of his countrymen to lay aside old prejudices. It was thought, indeed, by many claiming high authority a rash "leap in the dark." But for the great end he had to crown his policy, and with a full knowledge of the risk he took and the interests he had at stake, Lord Salisbury virtually committed for the time being to the keeping of the United States the vast total of British interests in the New World. The most significant performance of the last period of his active life was then neither pacifist nor Imperial, but Anglo-Saxon. It follows that this generation cannot pass a final judgment on his policy. We can point, indeed, to a province added here or there to His Majesty's dominions. We can speak of war avoided, or of oil poured upon the raging waters of democratic Chauvinism. But our greatest heritage is an idea left alike to the peoples of the Empire, and to a once component part of it that chose another way. How often in the midst of recent friction between America and England, caused by misunderstandings that are not yet totally composed, Lord Salisbury's ideal of a generous mutual

treatment stands to inspire eternally the statesmen and the journalists of either side. Complete mutual trust, the holding of nothing back at the expense even of immediate sacrifice, form an essential feature of the Pan-Anglo-Saxon plan. There are signs that the statesman and the journalist in England have come to shrink from accepting to the full the logical consequences which that plan involves. That may be a prudent or a pernicious attitude. It is certainly inconsistent with the teaching of Lord Salisbury, and no follower of his can approach in a spirit of suspicion the interpretation of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty.

What is the test by which to judge the lasting greatness of a Foreign Secretary? It lies in the measure of his contribution to the resources of diplomacy. There are statesmen like Palmerston who play their part with credit upon the stage of international activity. Their success is personal, and therefore temporary. Different far is the success achieved by one who like Lord Salisbury bequeathed to his successors machinery and modes of action, thought out anew and practised by him-

self. Dispassionate reflection, patient reliance upon the processes of time, the preference for concerted rather than isolated action among the family of nations, and for negotiating with governments rather than with peoples; loyalty to the rules of international morality, if only for the sake of the international stability which is resultant—all these are qualities, Tory qualities, left by Lord Salisbury for succeeding diplomats to copy. “The bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days”—this was the dying cry of his Elizabethan prototype. Can it be asserted that Lord Salisbury proved untrue to the tradition which he inherited from the greatest of his ancestors? “The successor of Bismarck,” “the Nestor of his generation,” “the last of the Barons”—such were the phrases with which men shed a kind of mystery around the character of the dead Prime Minister. It would be simpler to say that there died in him the statesman who led Europe for twenty years by the power of his unbending purpose, his experience, and his unwavering rectitude. The reserve of the aris-



toocrat, the habit of the scholar, kept him aloof, and made him shroud completely those private and personal affairs that win a meretricious popularity for some politicians. A bent figure walking in St. James's Park alone; a courtly figure in attendance on the Queen at a Royal garden party; the momentary vision of an old man driven swiftly through the London streets, crouching forward in a little bright blue pill-box brougham;<sup>1</sup> a glimpse for the favoured few into the laboratory at Hatfield,—made up all that was corporeal in the magnetism that drew men to his creed. But few Prime Ministers have projected upon the public mind so sharp an image of their transcendent qualities of brain and heart; and when he died, the humblest and the noblest felt that a great epoch had been ended, that the Father of the Country had been taken, that a great Christian Gentleman was dead.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury had a peculiar habit of leaning forward in his seat and of clutching hold of the door of the brougham on either side.

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